

**THE CONCEPTUALISATION AND APPLICATION
OF SERVICE-LEARNING IN HIGHER EDUCATION:
A CASE STUDY.**

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DECLARATION

I, the undersigned, hereby declare that the work contained in this thesis is my own original work and that I have not previously in its entirety or in part submitted it at any university for a degree.

Signature:.

Date:

SUMMARY

The central question that this research study addresses is whether higher education institutions in South Africa are sufficiently meeting the needs of their students, by contextualising and integrating their academic curricula with service delivery in communities. The higher education sector has been criticized for not adequately promoting and developing social responsibility in the context of civic awareness among their students.

This study suggests that service-learning could become a vital force in educational change and promote social equity by enabling the advancement of historically disadvantaged communities. Service-learning could thus be the vehicle that links academic learning outcomes, service in communities and civic education.

The purpose of this study is to explore the theoretical foundations of service-learning in order to achieve a deeper understanding of what service-learning entails. The Occupational Therapy Department of the University of Stellenbosch was selected as a case study to critically assess to what extent it has conceptualised, planned, implemented and assessed its service-learning programmes in terms of the key elements, principles and goals of service-learning.

The research strategy for this study is a qualitative case study. Qualitative data was obtained through the completion of an open-ended questionnaire by the final year Occupational Therapy students. Semi-structured interviews were also conducted with the head of the department and different representatives of the community project that was selected for the purpose of this research study.

The study concludes that the Occupational Therapy Department did in fact, integrate its academic curriculum outcomes with service delivery in the community. However, the development of civic awareness among students needs to be explicitly linked to the academic learning outcomes and service delivery in communities.

OPSOMMING

Die vraagstuk wat hierdie studie probeer aanspreek, is om vas te stel tot watter mate instansies vir hoër onderrig en opvoeding in Suid Afrika die behoeftes van hul studente aanspreek. Die instansies word gekritiseer dat hulle akademiese kurrikulums nie genoegsaam geïntegreerd is met dienslewering in die gemeenskap nie, en dat hulle ook nie genoegsame sosiale verantwoordelikheid en gemeenskapsbewustheid by hulle studente aanmoedig nie.

Hierdie studie stel voor dat diensleer gebruik word as 'n tegniek vir opvoedkundige veranderinge en die bevordering van sosiale gelykheid vir die bemagtiging van histories benadeelde gemeenskappe. Diensleer kan dus gebruik word om akademiese leer uitkomst, dienslewering en burgerlike opvoeding te verbind.

Die doel van hierdie navorsing is om die teoretiese basis van diensleer te ondersoek om sodoende 'n deeglike begrip te kry van wat diensleer werklik behels. Die Arbeidsterapie Departement van die Universiteit van Stellenbosch is gekies as gevallestudie om vas te stel hoe hulle hul diensleer programme konseptualiseer, beplan, implementeer en assessee, t.o.v. die kern elemente, beginsels en doelstellings van diensleer.

Die navorsingstrategie wat aangewend is om die doel van hierdie navorsing te bereik, is 'n kwalitatiewe gevallestudie. Kwalitatiewe data is verkry deur die voltooiing van 'n ope vraelys deur die finale jaar Arbeidsterapie studente en deur semi-gestruktureerde onderhoude met die hoof van die Arbeidsterapie Departement en verteenwoordigers van 'n gemeenskapsprojek wat gekies is vir die doel van die studie.

Die studie het vasgestel dat die Arbeidsterapie Departement se akademiese kurrikulum uitkomst wel met dienslewering in die gemeenskap geïntegreerd is. In die lig van die navorsingsbevindinge word 'n aanbeveling gemaak dat die ontwikkeling van burgerlikebewustheid en sosiale verantwoordelikheid ten opsigte van gemeenskapsbehoeftes, direk verbind moet word aan akademiese leer en diens uitkomst.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

DoE	:	The Department of Education
HOD	:	Head of Department
JET	:	Joint Education Trust
NCHE	:	National Commission on Higher Education
OT	:	Occupational Therapy
SA	:	South Africa
SL	:	Service-learning
SAQA	:	South African Qualifications Authority
US	:	University of Stellenbosch
USA	:	United States of America
JET	:	Joint Education Trust

CHAPTER 1

ORIENTATION, CONTEXTUALISATION AND PROBLEM FORMULATION

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Higher education in South Africa is to be transformed to promote social equity by addressing the development needs of a democratic South Africa, namely meeting people's needs, developing human resources, building the economy and democratising the state and society (Badat, 2002). In order to do so, would require a transformed system that needs to be reshaped to serve a new social order and to meet the pressing national needs by responding to a context of new realities and opportunities (DoE, 1997). In this regard institutions of higher learning are required to conceptualise a "radical departure from previously divisive and fractured social structures and a move towards new and more integrative forms of social organisation" (DoE, 1996b:76).

1.2 BACKGROUND AND CONTEXTUALISATION OF THE STUDY

The National Higher Education Plan requires that every higher education institution develops an institutional plan which would "take into account the unique or distinctive mission of the institution, and be informed by student demand, by labour market requirements, by societal equity and development needs and by the new demands of knowledge production in the context of technological innovation and globalisation" (DoE, 1998:3).

The general purpose envisaged for transforming higher education in South Africa is essentially threefold, i.e. the transformation of teaching, research and service. Most higher education institutions, however, seem not to be fully in line with the requirements of the National Plan or the White Paper requirements in terms of responsiveness to the broader societal interests and needs (Cloete and Bunting, 2000). Criticism has been generally levelled at higher education institutions particularly the role and functions of academics, for their general lack of social relevance in course design and course delivery. They are moreover charged with the lack of commitment to relevant teaching that is grounded in experiential and

emancipatory approaches to learning, particularly the absence or dearth of institutional responsiveness to social responsibility (Kezar and Rhoads, 2001; Checkoway, 2001). Institutions have been challenged for their lack of connection to secondary education, between workplace and academic study, and linking campus work to that of community (Eyler and Giles, 1999).

This study is furthermore cognisant of the reality that higher education in South Africa has not been producing enough high-level graduates with relevant cognitive, economic and social skills to participate in the local and global market (Cloete and Bunting, 2000). Evidence generally suggests that the research functions within higher education have not changed sufficiently in terms of relevant knowledge production and its dissemination in the context of social and economic needs. According to Cloete and Bunting, (2000) the system is not sufficiently equipping the majority of students with appropriate skills to adequately function efficiently in the modern knowledge-based economy and in its diverse and complex socio-cultural environment.

1.3 PROBLEM-FORMULATION

This study seeks to engage the complex, problematic issues related to the service goals, general challenges and implications of service learning in the entire realm of the higher education sector in South Africa. In order to unpack the general problem of higher education as mentioned above, we need to initiate this study by examining the service goal vision within the higher education sector.

1.3.1 The service goal within higher education institutions

Most universities generally see their primary role as the creation and application of knowledge (Stanton, Giles and Cruz, 1999). It would appear, however, that academic knowledge is not sufficient to motivate students to think about the social and economic life of society. Neither does academic knowledge necessarily develop civic competencies. Furthermore, research and teaching based on disciplinary knowledge is also not sufficiently integrated with or connected to the pressing needs of communities. While there may be a number of course curricula that are connected to community service (Perold, 1998), their focus would be mainly on student learning and practical experience, but does not necessarily aim

to develop the goals of civic awareness and social responsibility. This may imply that students would not really understand or grapple with social change and the impact of democracy objectives of their institutions as envisaged in the concept of service-learning. In South Africa there exists no clear “official” (i.e. Government) concept of “service learning”, except references to community service or civic mindedness and its implications for teaching and learning in higher education.

By definition service-learning in the context of this study, would refer to the integration of service with learning in the community. This suggests there would be a balance between learning goals and service outcomes, that the service enhances the learning and the learning enhances the service, and the benefits are equal to both providers and the recipients (Perold, 1998). Most service-learning (henceforth SL) programmes within higher education institutions, however, seem to be organised and implemented as fragmented and incoherent activities within individual institutions, faculties or departments (Perold and Omar, 1997). Because they are not generally regarded as part of the core business of the institution, these programmes are, problematically, often viewed as peripheral activities, which have neither direct relation to the curriculum, nor do they address the national goals of social and economic reconstruction as articulated in the White Paper for Higher Education.

To exacerbate the issue, the various interpretations of SL, its diverse purposes and the practices, also seem to vary across a broad spectrum of implementation (Perold, 1998). Too many community service programmes still seem to be charitable in their intention and do not seek to address the social conditions of communities. The White Paper (1997) explicitly proposes significant goals for SL programmes in higher education institutions, yet there is no clear national policy framework to guide institutions with regard to the implementation of SL. In 1997 the Community Service in Higher Education Project established by The Joint Education Trust (JET), initiated a research project and consulted with five government departments and all the South African higher education institutions to find out about their policy positions and how they view community service. The research study found that of the five government departments only the departments of Health and Justice had clearly defined policies for the

implementation of community service for higher education students (Perold, 1998). A further problem emerges, in that, although there is a growing interest in the concept of SL, very limited research is recorded in this regard and certainly not much public debate is happening.

This study is mindful of the practices in teaching and research policies in many higher education institutions in South Africa where they are too often still guarding their academic insularity and narrow disciplinary programmes. Academic staff members seem often too reluctant to get involved in SL programmes, as they do not always understand this to be part of their professional role. Many educators believe that the problems of society are not central to their roles in the institution (Checkoway, 2001). Many universities also have a number of partnerships that, although thoughtfully conceived, have no structure or clear strategy for learning from engagement with their communities and as such learning benefits are not optimised.

In order to operationalise service as the third goal of higher education institutions, the institutionalisation of SL would need to enhance student learning, build collaborative partnerships with communities and in this way fulfil and integrate the activities of teaching, research and service in the institution. This view would hold major challenges for the restructuring of the higher education sector.

1.3.2 The challenges of higher education restructuring

In its report the National Commission on Higher Education (NCHE) (1996) identified significant systemic deficiencies within the South African higher education system which directly or indirectly impact on SL, some of which include:

- A mismatch between higher education's output and the needs of a modernising economy.
- Narrow, closed-system approaches and programmes of teaching and research, which have not been contextualised, and the content of the knowledge produced and disseminated which was not responding to the problems and needs of the country or the levels of poverty in communities.

- A lack of regulatory frameworks within institutions which resulted in a history of fragmented organisational and administrative systems with weak accountability.
- A divided social order in South African higher education institutions which was shaped by apartheid laws based largely along racial and ethnic lines, which resulted in disparity in advantage, power and privilege between rich minority and poor majority (Badat, 2002; Subotzky, 2000).
- A racial divide among historically disadvantaged higher education institutions which distinguished the type of programmes and courses offered at these institutions (Hartshorne, 1992; Kraak, 2000).
- A curriculum which focused mainly on Mode 1 knowledge, which was inward-looking, transmission-oriented, disciplinary and distinguishes strongly between everyday and academic knowledge (Muller, 2000).
- A need for political and economic transformation which demands the fundamental restructuring of higher education policy to contribute towards and support the process of societal transformation (Badat, 2002; Subotzky, 2000).

The difficulty this Study faces is that such potent challenges as indicated above, hold serious implications for service-learning in higher education.

1.3.3 The implications of service-learning in higher education

Service-learning could become a vital force in educational change and promote social equity by enabling advancement of historically disadvantaged communities. SL could also serve as a vehicle for transforming the esoteric nature of the liberal arts higher education toward a more appropriate, community relevant and skills based qualification (Checkoway, 2001). For educators it could be a creative teaching and learning strategy to connect the abstract disciplinary study to the realities of the needs of local communities.

This study is mindful that SL could also serve as a challenge to community-based organisations and civic agencies to participate in the process of higher education (Checkoway, 2001). In the process of poverty alleviation SL could serve as a

mechanism to attract and enlist the talents and skills of students. In so doing, students are provided with the opportunity to integrate their theory with practice in real life contexts while at the same time, linking school to communities and thought to action through structured initiatives (Eyler and Giles, 1999). In terms of collaboration between academics, students and communities, SL holds multiple potential benefits for both higher education institutions and their local communities as knowledge, action and experience is integrated (Perold, 1998). This however is part and parcel of the challenge students and lecturers face in the production of knowledge.

1.3.4 Service-learning and the production of knowledge

With the current advancement of global knowledge, there has been a growing public demand for relevance and accountability in terms of knowledge production (Muller, 2000). According to Kraak (2000) a fundamental transformation in knowledge production is taking place, leading to the emergence of a new mode of knowledge production termed 'Mode 2' knowledge. Mode 1 knowledge production refers to academic disciplinary science and research while Mode 2 knowledge production is 'trans-disciplinary, trans-institutional' and heterogeneous. In short, Mode 2 is problem-solving knowledge. It recognises that knowledge is not only produced within the walls of academic institutions, which are often isolated from real-world problems, but entails a social process that integrates academic knowledge with experiential or real-world problem-solving knowledge (Kraak, 2000; Waghid, 2001).

What this study seeks to problematize is what Boud and Solomon (2001) emphasise, as learning as productive practice of everyday work, embedded in the culture, structures, relationships and processes of the workplace. The domination of technology would seem to become secondary to the social and cultural focus especially in the workplace. So the knowledge generated within communities and the workplace may differ significantly from that generated and sustained by academic institutions. This however is an issue which has not been sufficiently appreciated in most higher education institutions.

Higher education institutions could therefore become catalysts in order to advance not only relevant knowledge production, but also knowledge which has a direct bearing on communities (Harkavy, 2000). By integrating disciplinary knowledge with real-world problems, students learn to understand the relationship between knowing and doing, and between what they learn and how they live. This could furthermore lead to socially useful and accountable knowledge that would also contribute to the development needs of the poor. But most importantly, it recognises the legitimacy of knowledge in both the university and community. The question however is how such legitimate knowledge production fits into the role that universities ought to play in pursuing SL as an integral part of their transformation.

1.3.5 The role of the university in service-learning

As stated earlier, higher education has been charged with failing to address meaningful economic, social and environmental problems as well as failing to prepare graduates to meet the rigours of socially responsible citizenship (Cloete and Bunting, 2000; Reardon, 1998). Furthermore, teaching and learning does not necessarily tend to develop civic competencies primarily because institutions seem to have lost their sense of civic purpose (Checkoway, 2001). As a result, this has called for a shift or transformation in the role and function of the university. Kraak (2000) views the key features of this role and function of the university as a transition away from the idea of a university in its traditional liberal form as a 'house of knowledge', isolated from the broader society to pursue pure disciplinary research and higher learning, to a conception of the university in the service market, serving the innovative demands of the new global knowledge economy.

Waghid (2001) agrees that there needs to be an emphasis on the shift towards developing greater problem-solving skills and applied knowledge as opposed to mere disciplinary research. Due to pressure, universities world-wide have sought to transform from 'elite' and 'closed' systems to more 'massified' and 'open' systems that would make provision for increased 'lifelong learning' of adult learners who require reskilling, and which would be more in line with the new knowledge demands in the world of work (Kraak, 2000).

The implication is that research and knowledge production need to be reconceptualised in a way that would promote an ethos of engagement, which would contribute to the diversity of research paradigms in communities. Higher education institutions need to recognise that there may possibly be no single form of scholarship, but that scholarships of necessity “go beyond the creation of new knowledge and include integration, teaching, application and engagement in which the institution becomes a partner in addressing the pressing problems of society” (Checkoway, 2001:134).

1.3.6 Conclusion

Clearly, the central problem this study grapples with, is that higher education institutions seem not to be sufficiently meeting the needs of their students, and by extension, the South African civil society. Academic programmes are not generally contextualised and integrated with community service delivery. Consequently students within these institutions are not adequately developing problem-solving skills to assist them personally and ultimately to contribute to poverty alleviation in communities. This would suggest that higher education institutions are struggling to conceptualise and operationalize their purpose of delivering service, promoting and developing social responsibility in the context of civic awareness among their students.

1.4 PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study is to explore the theoretical foundations of service-learning in order to achieve a better understanding of what SL actually entails. An extension of this will be to critically assess the current practices of SL within the Occupational Therapy Department of the University of Stellenbosch and their impact on students, the institution and the communities they serve. The Occupational Therapy Department has been selected as a case study because it has demonstrated to be one of few departments that have integrated SL as an extension of their curricula. During the third and fourth year of training students are mandated to perform community service as part of their curriculum requirements.

The intention is moreover to assess the service-learning practices in relation to the key elements, goals, principles and value of service-learning as has been widely

developed in the literature review. The relevant information and knowledge that will be gained through this study could hopefully serve as future guidelines to higher education institutions for planning and managing the development, implementation and institutionalisation of SL as an integral part of curricula design and course delivery.

1.5 RESEARCH QUESTION

How effectively is service-learning conceptualised, planned and implemented in the Department of Occupational Therapy in terms of the key elements, goals, principles and value of service learning?

1.6 THE NEED FOR THE RESEARCH

The higher education policy documents (NCHE, 1996; DoE, 1997; DoE, 1998) emphasise the need for change within South African higher education institutions, to redress the effects of apartheid in the educational field and to reconstruct new social relationships between state, civil society and education and training institutions. This clearly relates to the Education White Paper goals, which calls on institutions to demonstrate their “social responsibility and their commitment to the common good by making available expertise and infrastructure for community service programmes” (DoE, 1997:5). A further goal relates to the inclusion of students as key stakeholders in the process “to promote and develop social responsibility and awareness amongst students of the role of higher education in social and economic development, through community service programmes” (DoE, 1997:6).

Although many higher education institutions are involved in community service, these programmes or projects generally tend to be marginalised or are treated as an add-on programme due to the lack of an institutional policy and implementation strategy. This study articulates the need for higher education institutions to pursue SL hopefully as an institution-wide initiative which integrates community development and academic knowledge. Through an understanding and the institutionalisation of SL into course design and delivery, it could promote a culture of service and service-learning in institutions. This could encourage institutions to develop curricula and programmes that are socially relevant and accountable.

Such responsive programmes in terms of their peculiar contexts, may promote civic mindedness among students and staff, by linking academic study and research to issues of development.

1.7 LIMITATIONS AND DELIMITATIONS

Although SL has been widely practised in countries such as the U.S.A. (Eyler and Giles, 1999; Stanton, et al., 1999) it is fairly new and limited in its application in the South African educational context. The study is limited to a single department within the Faculty of Health Sciences at the University of Stellenbosch. The research will focus on the staff and students of the Occupational Therapy department and the communities that they serve. Because this is a case study of a single department within the university, the purpose is not to be either extensive or to generalise but rather to understand the current practices of service-learning within this particular case and hopefully make recommendations for the integration of service-learning into existing programme design and delivery.

1.8 RELEVANT KEY CONCEPTS IN THIS STUDY

1.8.1 Service-Learning

Jacoby (1996:5) defines service-learning as a “form of experiential education in which students engage in activities that address human and community needs together with structured opportunities intentionally designed to promote student learning and development”. Reflection and reciprocity are regarded as key concepts of service-learning.

Service-learning is thus an integration of service and learning in a way which will create synergy. According to Jacoby (1996) the hyphen in service-learning is symbolically representative of this symbiotic relationship. The goals of service and learning have equal weight, which renders the hyphen therefore essential. This implies that lectures and classroom activities would not be enough to stimulate higher order thinking and problem-solving as these skills can only grow out of direct experience. They will hopefully develop through active involvement and real-life experiences in workplaces and the community.

1.8.2 Community

The term community has been used in diverse ways and encompasses a variety of interpretations and definitions according to the various contexts in which it is used.

Bowman (in Willis, 1993) defines community as being either descriptive or ideological. In the descriptive sense community refers to neighbourhoods, interest groups, people organised into a political, municipal or social unity. In the ideological sense community may define a group, that is, there may be a degree of 'common interest among its members' while at the same time it 'defines its boundaries and relations with other groups'.

Zlotkowski (1999:99) contends that the term "community" in the service-learning context, refers to the "off-campus populations underserved by the market economy and organisations whose primary purpose is the common good". Consequently interaction between different interest groups becomes important and necessary in terms of the social development and reconstruction of disadvantaged groups. It would therefore be necessary to accommodate a broader understanding of the concept of community in the context of service-learning as used in this study.

1.8.3 Experiential learning

The notion of experiential learning is derived from Dewey's constructivist theory of learning and is based on the education principle that learning and development do not necessarily occur as a result of experience alone, but as a result of reflection on that experience (Eyler and Giles, 1999; Jacoby, 1996). Experiential theorists generally believe that we learn through combinations of thought and action, reflection and practice, theory and application. In experiential learning reflection becomes central to the learning process. In a service-learning context, programmes are explicitly structured to connect students' service i.e. concrete experience to their study through observation, reflection and analysis as provided in the curriculum and in this way effect learning (Jacoby, 1996).

1.8.4 Higher education institutions

The term “higher education institutions” refers to broad sectors of tertiary education and training, and includes all learning programmes leading to qualifications higher than grade 12 or its equivalent in terms of the National Qualifications Framework (DoE, 1997). Institutions providing the services for this band are Universities, Technikons and Colleges, including those colleges on the Further Education and Training band that are offering post matric programmes.

1.9 RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

Mouton (1996) likens research design to a journey in which the researcher has a specific purpose in mind. The purpose will guide the route and hence also the destination. For the purposes of this study, the specific design selected is a case study which focuses on the Occupational Therapy (OT) department of the University of Stellenbosch. Mouton (2001) argues that case studies are usually qualitative in nature and provide in-depth descriptions of a small number of cases usually less than 50.

This study will utilize a qualitative, exploratory and descriptive approach to critically assess whether the current practices of SL within the Occupational Therapy Department compare or relate to the key elements, principles, goals and value of service-learning in higher education. Babbie (1998) explains that exploratory studies are usually concerned with examining a new topic or when the subject of study is still relatively new. The three purposes of such an exploratory design are:

- to satisfy the researcher’s curiosity and desire for a better understanding of the phenomenon under study;
- to test the feasibility of undertaking a more careful study; and
- to lay the groundwork for more systematic and rigorous methods to be used in later studies.

Based on the above purposes, the literature study in this investigation will explore the concept of service-learning and describe the key elements, principles, goals and values of service-learning programmes.

1.9.1 The unit of analysis

According to Mouton (2001) the unit of analysis is the phenomenon which the researcher is investigating. Since the study will be located within the OT Department of the University of Stellenbosch, and within the community, the units of analysis will be the thirty-two final year students, one staff member (head of the department), the community members involved in the project, i.e. the full-time occupational therapist, four volunteer trainers and the chairperson of the project who is also the manager of one of the schools involved in the community project.

1.9.2 Data collection techniques

The following data collection techniques have been used:

Open-ended questionnaires

Questionnaires form a key source of information for this study.

The group of 32 final year Occupational Therapy students have been requested to reflect on their service-learning experiences through the completion of an open-ended questionnaire.

Semi-structured interviews

Individual semi-structured interviews were conducted with the head of the OT department and four representatives of the community project to assess attitudes, perceptions, experiences and impact of service-learning on students, the institution and the community.

1.9.3 Data analysis

Data in this study was analysed according to those methods described by Babbie (1998:257-263) and Mouton (2001:108-109). The aim of the data analysis is to identify patterns and draw conclusions in order to ultimately understand how SL is conceptualised, planned and implemented within the Occupational Therapy Department and how it relates to the literature review.

1.10 RESEARCH OUTCOMES

The following research outcomes are envisaged:

- To determine the degree of congruence between the current SL practices in the Occupational Therapy Department of the University of Stellenbosch and the key elements, principles, goals and values of service-learning programmes as stated in the literature.
- To determine the factors that have influenced the congruence or lack thereof between the current service-learning practices and how it should be conceptualised, planned and implemented in course design and delivery.
- To recommend possible suggestions for the future planning and implementation of service-learning as an institution-wide initiative.

1.11 THE PROPOSED STRUCTURE FOR THIS RESEARCH STUDY

Chapter 1 explored the background, contextualisation and problem formulation of this research study. In Chapter 2 literature relevant to this study is discussed. In Chapter 3 the research design is described in detail regarding the planning, data collection processes and methods. In Chapter 4 the analysis, presentation and findings are reported and discussed while chapter 5 provides the final interpretations, recommendations and conclusions.

1.12 CONCLUSION

In this chapter, the background, contextualisation and problem formulation was described to orientate the reader towards the need for the study. The purpose of this study is informed by the complex issues related to the service goals in higher education institutions, the general challenges and implications of SL in this sector, the relevance of socially useful knowledge and the transformed role of the universities in SL as discussed in the chapter. In the following chapter the theoretical framework of the study will be discussed.

CHAPTER 2

A REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE ON SERVICE-LEARNING

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The general purpose of this study is to explore the theoretical foundations of service-learning (SL) with a view to developing a broader understanding of the underpinnings of SL. This will hopefully promote a better understanding of the practices involved in SL, and as a result, develop into its ultimate institutionalisation in order to enhance the civic mission of institutions, and as such, promote curricular relevance for student learning outcomes. This chapter will briefly review the relevant literature to examine the concept of SL and in so doing, highlight key elements and purposes of service-learning as they relate to issues of mutual benefit to all partners involved. The purpose is moreover to particularly review SL in the South African context by extrapolating lessons from the American service-learning experience as among some best practices and demonstrate how they can contribute to the ultimate institutionalisation of service-learning in terms of homegrown experiences of different campuses in South Africa.

2.2 THE EMERGENCE OF THE NOTION OF SERVICE-LEARNING

In South Africa the use of SL is still relatively recent although, by comparison, it is not such a new concept in the United States of America (USA) (Stanton, et al., 1999). Because the body of literature on this subject is still limited in South Africa, the present study will rely mainly on the research and other literature published in the USA. This would therefore mean that the conceptualisation, implementation, research and diverse models of SL in the USA that have emerged in the literature, of necessity would reflect the USA social and academic contexts. However, this could prove useful for the South African context as local institutions could learn from that experience. It is clear that the essence of the USA SL paradigm may prove relevant for our current local processes of social and institutional transformation by addressing curricular transformation as mandated by the Act on Higher Education (1998).

Essentially the elements of SL can be traced back to John Dewey's experiential education (Eyler and Giles, 1999). In the 1970s variations of the notion of SL appeared as part of the principles of experience-based education, while Kolb's work (1984) carried it forward into the 1980s. However, the concept "service-learning" as a distinct term did not develop into a vital educational movement until the mid-1980s (Stanton et al., 1999).

During the 1980s higher education institutions generally were criticized for not fulfilling their civic and social responsibilities. This was displayed in the lack of clarity of curriculum relevance to develop relevant skills among students. The lack of clarity with regard to purposes and goals in terms of poor institutional and departmental responsiveness to the larger social good was thus at the centre of the debate (Kezar and Rhoads, 2001, Reardon, 1998 and Jacoby, 1996). This realisation gave rise to renewed interest in and strong impetus for service-learning in the USA in the 1990s. Lally (2001) however, believes that the failure of institutions to become involved in SL was not always due to a lack of interest or motivation, but rather a lack of a clear understanding of what service learning really entailed.

According to Kezar and Rhoads (2001:150) Dewey highlighted the problematic distinctions between *"doing and knowing, emotions and intellect, experience and knowledge, work and play, individual and the world ..."* Boyer, (in Kezar and Rhoads, 2001), argues that this dualistic view of the world was substantially entrenched in the values and structures of higher education institutions which created intellectual and social isolation and as a result, reduced the effectiveness of the institution in terms of the vision it had for students. Boyer argues that learners would need to reflect on the relationship between what they learn and how they live. To give greater substance to the latter it would be useful to have a closer look at the various definitions of SL that abound, particularly in the USA context.

2.3 THE SCOPE OF SERVICE-LEARNING

2.3.1 Exploring different definitions

Service-learning or community service learning as it is also referred to has a wide range of definitions and naturally would evoke a wide range of reactions. Due to the diverse interpretations of the purposes of SL many different definitions of SL have been recorded in the literature (Eyler and Giles, 1999; Stanton, 1999; Howard, 1998; Jacoby, 1996). In an attempt to clarify the key elements of SL, it may be necessary to look at different definitions of SL. One of the most comprehensive definitions of service-learning and also one of the more frequently cited is that offered by Bringle and Hatcher (1996:222):

We view service learning as a credit bearing educational experience in which students participate in an organised service activity that meets identified community needs and reflect on the service activity in such a way as to gain further understanding of the course content, a broader appreciation of the discipline, and an enhanced sense of civic responsibility. Unlike extracurricular voluntary service, service learning is a course-based service experience that produces the best outcomes when meaningful service activities are related to course material through reflection activities such as directed writings, small group discussions and class presentations. Unlike practica and internships, the experiential activity in a service-learning course is not necessarily skill-based within the context of professional education.

This definition may be particularly useful for this study because it captures most of the key elements of SL while it also seeks to clarify the distinctions among concepts that are often collapsed, such as service-learning and volunteerism and traditional practicals and internships. However, the authors do not seem to have explicitly included 'reciprocity' as a key feature of SL but merely allude to it by reference to the phrase "identified community needs". Jacoby (1996:7) however, broadens this definition by adding the notion of reciprocity as a structural component, (mutual learning between those served and those serving) which is needed to transform service into service learning.

2.3.2 Problematization of interpretations and purpose of SL

When the notion service-learning first surfaced in the American educational literature, it did so with an explosion of different interpretations. According to Weigert (1998) some proponents refer to SL as community-based learning or community learning rather than service-learning. SL moreover caused much debate in terms of viewing it as a way to prepare students for active citizenship. Others perceive it as a means to involve universities in socially responsible action (Howard, 1998). But essentially service-learning seeks to combine and balance academic learning with civic development and service delivery (Perold, 1998).

2.3.3 Community service versus service-learning

It seems that SL ought to be clearly distinguished from volunteerism, community service, development work and traditional practicals or internships, since Shumer, (quoted by Stanton et al., 1999) argues they take the focus away from intentional learning. Service-learning essentially differs from volunteerism in that the latter is designed to meet community needs but is neither linked to instructional goals nor is it credit-bearing. While the focus in SL seeks to be effective intentional learning, Stanton (1999:208) contends that service is a mere by-product. SL therefore would appear not to be synonymous with mere service, for the service ought to be linked to learning outcomes in the proposed curriculum (Howard, 1998; Eyler and Giles, 1999).

Howard (1998) argues, however, that SL is not just about adding a community service option component or requirement to an academic course, but is from the outset about meaningfully integrating service with experiential learning. This means that the student's community service experiences in SL should serve as a critical learning complement to the envisaged academic outcomes of the curriculum.

2.3.4 Conclusion

It has become evident that SL essentially entails an inextricable teaching and experiential learning strategy. It entails a relationship:

- in which students actively perform a community service as part of their academic course-work whilst also seeking to meet the needs of the community;
- that distinguishes community service from service-learning by connecting all service activities to the envisaged learning outcomes of the course of study;
- that seeks to integrate action, reflection and social engagement;
- that provides structured time for students to think, discuss and write about their observations during their service activities;
- that allows students to use their skills and knowledge in real-life situations in their own communities; and
- that seeks to build bridges with community partners and integrates personal experience into the curriculum.

SL can therefore be seen as a well structured mode of teaching and learning interaction and partnership between academic institution, students and the community as shown in a contextual map (figure 1) below. All stakeholders will collaborate, share, learn and apply their knowledge, skills, values and experience within the community for the benefit of all stakeholders.

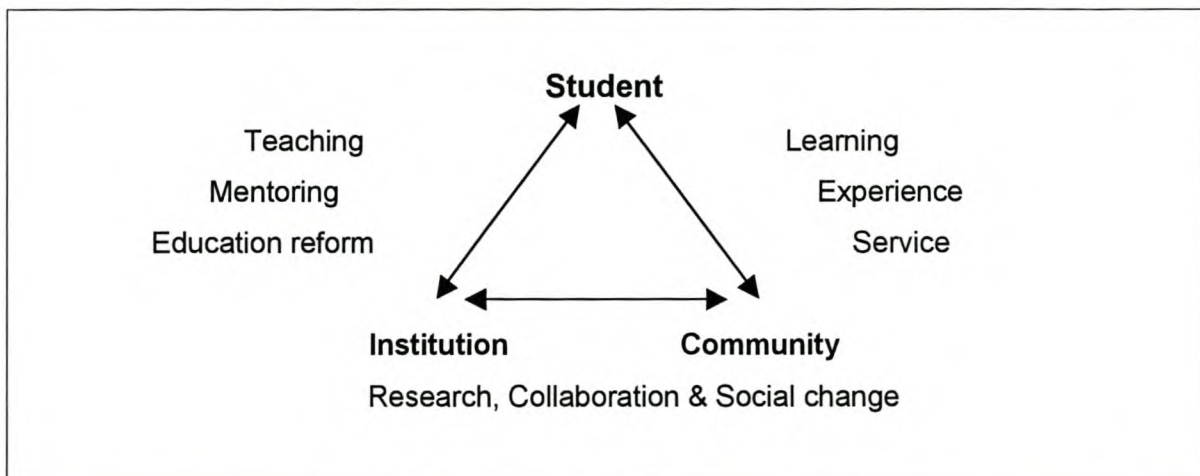


Figure 1: A contextual map for service-learning.

2.4. VARYING EMPHASES OF SERVICE AND LEARNING WITHIN INSTITUTIONS

While the purposes of higher education may essentially be regarded as teaching, research and service, the latter seems to remain at the centre of contemporary debate, especially in South Africa. Part of the debate derives from the way institutions reconceptualise and define their purpose and seeking to address the content of each of these purposes as stated in their institutional mission statements (Weigert, 1998).

Eyler and Giles (1999) established in their national survey across the USA that the situation is still relatively confused by the wide diversity of service-learning programmes and initiatives that abound. Their diverse interpretations of SL and the educational practices which reflect them, seem to vary across a broad spectrum. Because of this diversity, Sigmon, (cited by Eyler and Giles, 1999:5) designed a service and learning typology to illustrate the bias or emphases of the different models or programmes of SL implementation as summarised in table 2.1 below.

Table 1: A Service and Learning Typology.

SERVICE-learning	Service outcomes primary; learning goals secondary
Service-LEARNING	Learning goals primary; service outcomes secondary
Service Learning	Service and learning goals separate
SERVICE-LEARNING	Service and learning goals of equal weight; each enhances the other for all participants.

Sigmon (in Eyler and Giles, 1999)

The above typology suggests that in the SERVICE-learning category the focus is primarily to get students into the field to provide service to communities through volunteer service programmes. In a service-LEARNING focus students primarily observe community groups but the service component is limited, the emphasis being on the academic programmes. In the “service learning” model volunteer programmes may have no link to particular academic pursuits but exist alongside the curriculum. In the SERVICE-LEARNING model there is a balance between the

service to community and the academic learning, in which the service and the learning are reciprocally related. This implies that study and action are explicitly integrated and the hyphen symbolises the central role of reflection in the process of learning through community service. This research study embraces the latter position, which focuses on balancing service learning within the community with that of academic learning.

2.4.2 Differing views of service in SL

The notion of service has become a contested concept in the SL field precisely because it is viewed from different ideological and moral perspectives. Service to community may be viewed either from a philanthropic or a civic perspective (Henning, 1998; Pollack, 1999). A philanthropic perspective emphasises the spirit of altruism, while the civic perspective regards mutual respect and interdependence of rights and responsibilities as being important. The latter emphasises the nurturing of citizenship and the understanding of the interdependence of communities, based on democratic, civic values as being central to SL (Henning, 1998).

Cruz (in Stanton, et al., 1999:208) in a different way argues that service, if used as a “narrow rescue effort or out of a missionary narcissism”, may become a disservice to communities because it is used in a superficial way. Cruz further argues that when charity and philanthropy are conflated for the purpose of solving social issues, it becomes a disservice to both students and the community.

A civic perspective of SL essentially encourages the idea of reciprocity and collaboration between all stakeholders in order to transform service into service-learning. In the context of South Africa's social transformation, SL could focus on addressing deeply embedded social problems in order to bring about structural changes in both social and economic relations and the development of the needs of society.

2.5 EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING AS FOUNDATIONAL CONCEPT IN SL

As indicated, SL has its roots in Dewey's constructivist theory of experience and has been extended by Kolb's concept of the experiential learning cycle (Eyler and

Giles, 1999). Since SL emphasises learning by doing, Kolb proposes the notion of a learning cycle as starting with some concrete experience (CE), then proceeds to describe the notion of experience through reflective observation (RO) by analysing what happened during the observations. In the third step, synthesis and abstract conceptualisation (AC) the reflection practice stimulates the learner to integrate observations and implications with existing knowledge to formulate concepts and questions towards the deepening of the learner's understanding of the world and the causes of the need for service. In the fourth step, active experimentation (AE), the concepts are tested in new situations where this form of experimentation leads the learner to begin the cycle again, as indicated in the cycle below (figure 2.2) (Stanton et al., 1999; Jacoby, 1996; Kolb, 1984).

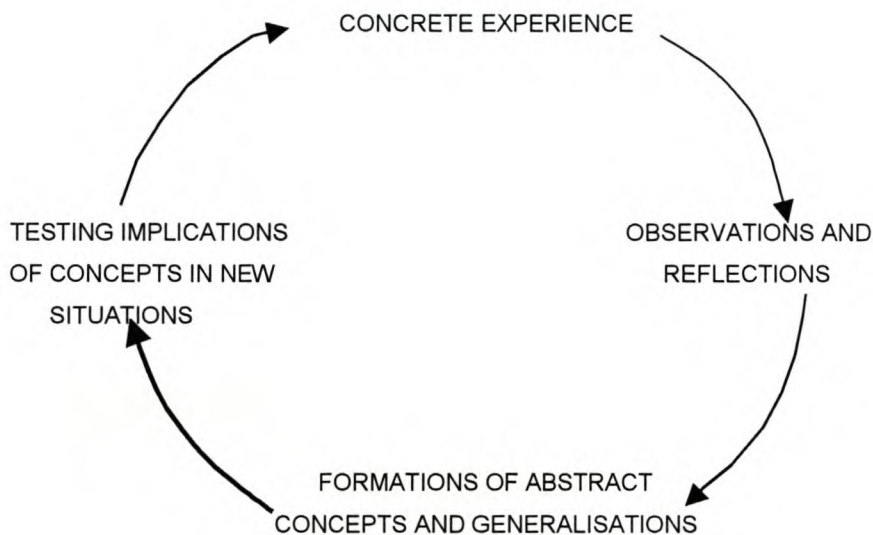


Figure 2: Kolb's experiential learning model

In this cycle Kolb (1984:38) describes learning as the “*process whereby knowledge is created through the transformation of experience*”. Essentially what Dewey and Kolb both illustrated is that knowledge and understanding are under continuous reconstruction as learners increase or modify their experience. In order to make sense of experience, it is necessary to reflect and think about it, enabling the experience to be assimilated into one's framework of concepts and constructs.

2.5.1 Implications of experiential learning for service-learning

The experiential learning cycle could provide learners with the opportunity to reflect critically on their own learning experiences and the way in which they do things and as a result, search for new and more effective ways of interacting with others during their SL experiences. This action-reflection approach in SL could assist learners to:

- define the problem;
- analyse and understand the problem;
- generate possible options to solve the problem;
- choose the most appropriate option;
- implement their chosen solution; and
- reflect on and evaluate the result.

These experiential learning processes above should help learners to learn and apply appropriate and relevant knowledge, skills, values and experience during their SL activities in the community. But even more importantly, Kolb's model underscores the centrality of reflection to the entire learning process (Kolb, 1984; Jacoby, 1996; Bringle and Hatcher, 1999).

2.6 KEY ELEMENTS OF SERVICE-LEARNING

After reviewing the definitions of Bringle and Hatcher (1996), Stanton (1990) and Jacoby (1996), as well as extending it to a number of other definitions, the following characteristics reflected in most definitions may be identified as forming the critical elements of SL.

2.6.1. Credit-bearing

The first element identified by Bringle and Hatcher is that SL is credit bearing and forms an integral part of the curriculum. Jacoby (1996) argues that this may be a limited approach to SL and as a result extends this view by including both curricular and co-curricular practice as part of SL. In general, there seems to be agreement across the SL spectrum that community service should form an integrated part of academic learning and that a system of credit should be awarded for the academic learning but not necessarily for the service. However,

academic staff support and participation in SL as a component of the curriculum, is perhaps a significant way to ensure that learning is taking place and is rewarded for its quality (Zlotkowski, 1999). The implication of this is that effective learning will result in meaningful service to recipients.

2.6.2. Reciprocity

Reciprocity is viewed as a fundamental concept in combining service and learning in most definitions. This implies that community needs are not identified for or on behalf of the community by the institution. Rather, it suggests that service will be located in the community and controlled as far as possible by the community. In order to ensure a reciprocal relationship there needs to be mutual agreement of benefits and responsibilities on both sides (Zlotkowski, 1999). Therefore, reciprocity may suggest that all partners involved in service-learning will act as teacher and learner, and not as servers and clients. All participants thus learn from and serve each other.

However, the full involvement of communities and their representatives in service initiatives may be a questionable issue. Sigmon, (quoted by Kezar and Rhoads, 2001:160) specifically developed two principles which relate to questions of implementation and involvement, namely:

- those being served control the service project;
- those being served become better able to serve and be served by their own actions.

This means community members and institutional service providers need to engage one another jointly and democratically in identifying needs and how such needs should be met. If the institution appears to be committed to a reciprocal relationship then it would view the community as an equal partner in their efforts to increase each other's capacities and power (Jacoby, 1996; Stanton, 1999). Howard (1998:22) argues that "*the service experiences inform and transform the academic learning, and the academic learning informs and transforms the service experience*". In other words, service and learning are reciprocally interrelated.

2.6.3 Reciprocity and mode 2 knowledge

The notion of reciprocity has wider consequences if we argue that the community is to be an equal partner. In any SL context, expertise is more than disciplinary knowledge and technical skills, for it also includes the knowledge that is derived from real-world problems (Kraak, 2000). In other words, the community lays claim to its own kind of knowledge and expertise, which the institution must acknowledge and accept (Subotzky, 2000; Zlotkowski, 1999). This notion of reciprocity moreover suggests that deliberate efforts must be made to produce, apply and evaluate knowledge, skills and values in the community that can contribute to the learning needs of students and also develop high-level competencies needed by the labour market. This presents the institution with the challenge to integrate Mode 2 knowledge production with their teaching and research and in this way develop knowledge that is “socially accountable, reflexive, trans-disciplinary and problem-orientated” (Waghid, 2001:12).

Waghid (2001) argues that if institutional educators become more reflexive about their biases and theoretical predispositions, they might be more willing to embrace Mode 2 knowledge and in this way build and support a reciprocal relationship that has the potential to integrate and mutually enrich experiential learning, socially relevant research and community service.

2.6.4 Collaboration

It is clear that before a reciprocal relationship can develop collaboration needs to take place. The definition of Chrislip and Larson, (in Jacoby, 1996:34), very aptly describes collaboration as “*a mutually beneficial relationship between two or more parties who work toward a common goal by sharing responsibility, authority, and accountability for achieving results.... The purpose of collaboration is to create a shared vision and joint strategies to address concerns that go beyond the purview of any particular party*”. In service-learning, the parties include the institution, students and the community and of course each of these stakeholders has their own interests, concerns and expectations which must be heard, acknowledged and addressed. Each partner brings certain skills, knowledge and assets that need to be realistically balanced with their interests, concerns and expectations towards mutually beneficial outcomes (Jacoby, 1996). This requires regular exchange of

information, altering strategies and activities, and sharing resources to enhance each other's capacities.

Henning (1998:45) adds that, " ... *the most vulnerable people in society ... are afforded the opportunity to voice their needs and to co-own the educational initiative*". Despite the fact that collaboration may be a difficult process, it ought to be an integral part of the process for laying the foundation for trust and community building. This is particularly important in the South African context where communities historically have been disempowered and alienated from institutions of higher education.

2.6.5 Reflection

Reflection is another concept that has been identified as a foundational principle of SL. It is mentioned in every text from Dewey (1938) to the most recent literature. SL is based on the principle that learning and development do not necessarily occur as a result of experience itself, but rather as a result of the reflection that accompanies the experience (Jacoby, 1996; Stanton et al., 1999; Eyler and Giles, 1999, Lally, 2001). In their definition Bringle and Hatcher (1996:222) argue that reflection on the service activity should lead to gaining "*further understanding of the activity, course content, a broader appreciation of the discipline and an enhanced sense of civic responsibility*". Furthermore, the importance of reflection as a complement to experience is expounded in Kolb's model of experiential learning (as stated earlier), and which has been widely applied as the rationale for approaches that takes into account the experience that learners bring.

Eyler & Giles (1999) symbolically describes reflection as the hyphen in service-learning which connects student experience in the community to academic learning. Prioritising SL as an integral part of the curriculum or course ought to provide students with the opportunity to reflect on the mastery of course content. But even more importantly, in the words of Zlotkowski (1999:99), students also develop an "*expanded appreciation of the contextual and social significance of the discipline in question and in an enhanced sense of civic responsibility*". Effective SL may therefore help learners to see their service delivery in the wider context of social justice and social policy, but it is the critical reflection component that allows

them to understand the causes of social injustice and learning how to act on them. This value of reflection is what distinguishes SL from the internships and practicals as well as from traditional volunteerism (Zlotkowski, 1999; Stanton, 1999; Lally, 2001).

Critical reflection clearly can be a powerful source of learning and as an integral part of the SL programme, may lead to transformative learning. This means changing how students understand their social order, and honing all action aimed at responding to the social needs of the community.

2.6.6 Conclusion

The above key elements of SL present themselves as extremely relevant for the purpose of this study because they provide meaningful guidelines for planning and structuring SL programmes within institutions and faculties in South Africa. SL clearly seeks to advance the idea that learning is a socio-contextual process that is most powerful when these key elements are valued and honed. Through these essential elements of SL, namely, credit-bearing, reciprocity, collaboration and reflection, academic learning is valued along with community-based experiential learning. At the same time it seeks to encourage civic and social responsibility, embracing institution-community partnerships which extends the learning process beyond the classroom walls. It also stresses the importance of applying knowledge and skills toward the improvement of human conditions.

2.7 GOALS OF SERVICE-LEARNING

Service-learning advocates (Stanton et al., 1999; Eyler and Giles, 1999) articulate a number of goals that service-learning effectively addresses. The cycle below (figure 2.3) graphically depicts the interaction between and the reciprocal relationship among the key elements and goals of SL. Each of the goals of SL, as discussed below, seeks to foster the development of students' civic duty, moral judgment, cultural competence and global sensitivity.

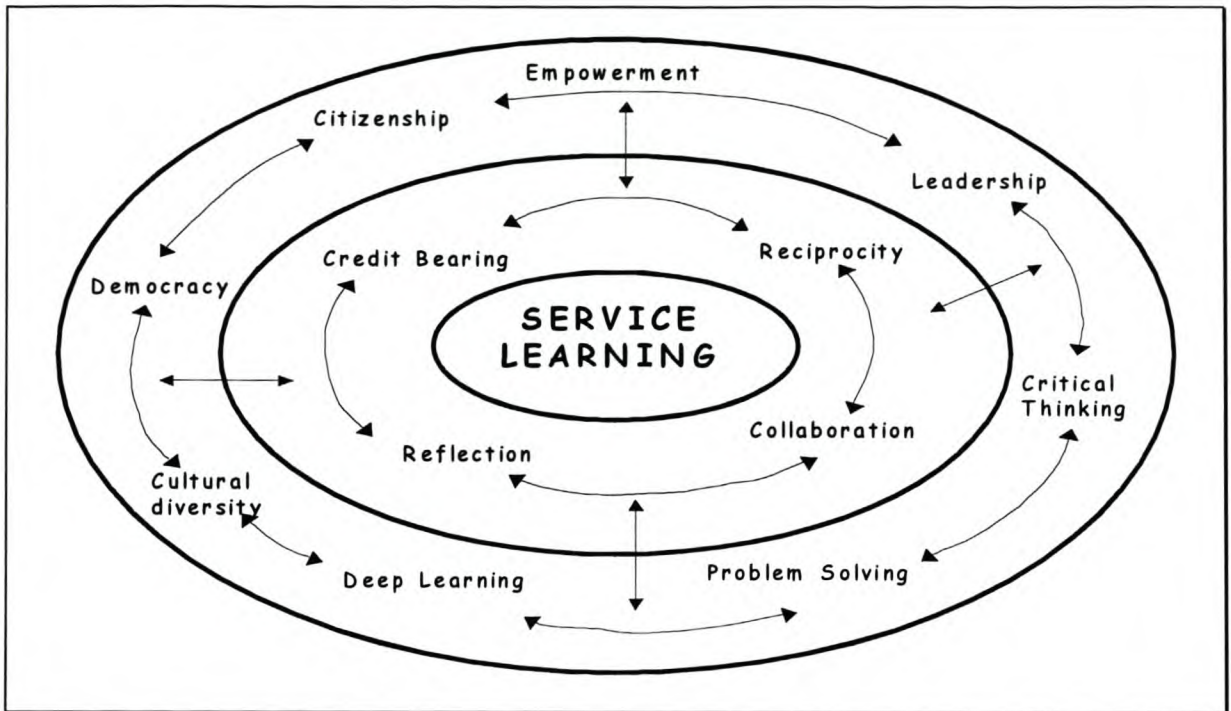


Figure 3: A graphic representation of the reciprocal relationship between the key elements and goals of service-learning.

2.7.1 Citizenship and democracy

Cirone, (cited by Jacoby, 1996:21) emphasises that *“people cannot be told how to be responsible, knowledgeable or caring citizens. They must be involved in the process”*. Service-learning therefore can only be a constructive force to develop educated citizens when students understand and appreciate not only how democracy is supposed to work, but also develop their own sense of responsibility to become active and informed participants in those processes.

Within an emerging democracy in South Africa, we need to take advantage of the capacity building potential that SL offers in developing citizenship. While performing SL activities, students operate as contributing citizens during the process of their own studies. At the same time they are acquiring skills, values and knowledge that equip them for civic participation (Eyler and Giles, 1999). This type of problem-based learning as linked to SL can become an effective strategy to develop the ability among students to understand complex social issues, and apply what they learn. SL clearly offers students the opportunity to learn and to practise the “what, how and why” of democracy (Mendel-Reyes, 1998:32).

Participation in well-integrated SL programmes should lead to the development of values, knowledge, skills, efficacy and commitment as underscored in the critical outcomes of citizenship.

2.7.2 Leadership and empowerment

Covey (1989) argues that leadership principles should create new paradigms of human interaction to bring about 'win/win' situations. He describes win/win as a frame of mind and heart that seeks agreements or solutions that are mutually beneficial and satisfying to all parties involved. This view sees life as being cooperative and not competitive and based on the belief that one person's success is not achieved at the expense or exclusion of the success of others. This definition clearly applies to the spirit of reciprocity and collaboration between all parties within a SL context.

Involvement in SL initiatives could provide students the opportunity to develop their own leadership capacity and see how their skills can make a difference within communities, which in turn, would lead to self-confidence, competence, responsibility and taking control of situations (Eyler and Giles, 1999). Leadership training, wherein students acquire skills in planning, communication, problem solving and various other citizenship and academic areas, can only benefit the communities that they serve. Leadership in a SL context can thus lead to the joy of involvement, ownership and growth and in this way create a culture of empowerment.

2.7.3 Social problem solving

Through SL, learners may begin to interrogate various dimensions of social issues in communities. Harkavy (2000) notes that students are learning as they serve. Because learning is organised around authentic community problems, students learn to understand the social issues, demonstrate their ability to analyse problems, apply their academic knowledge and establish clearer solutions to assist systemic change (Eyler and Giles, 1999). These processes suggest that SL is moreover solution-focused and seeking to provide significant support to community groups.

2.7.4 Critical thinking

Critical thinking, which allows students to identify, frame, resolve, and readdress social issues, is dependent on both knowledge and the students' own level of cognitive development. Pascarella and Terenzini, (in Eyler and Giles, 1999:118) indicate that the development of critical thinking skills is connected to effective and well-integrated service-learning experiences that emphasise student engagement in problem solving procedures. These critical thinking skills are developed by involving students in high levels of discussions, journal and report writing and application of subject matter to service situations. However, learning to think critically will require sharing in the learning process with others, as well as engaging directly with real people, issues and problems, rather than abstract knowledge (Eyler and Giles, 1999). SL provides students that opportunity to engage in structured reasoning and reflection about the real world and its social issues.

2.7.5 Deep learning as a dialectical approach to SL

The notion of deep learning refers to an effective strategy to enable students to conceptualise, seek connections between theory and experience and to be reflective. Biggs (1999) distinguishes between deep and surface learning. Surface learning essentially involves completing tasks with minimum effort to at least meet prescribed requirements, drawing on low-level cognitive skills. Deep learning, by contrast, requires higher order cognitive skills, meaningful engagement in and enjoyment of the learning, and a desire to think conceptually rather than gather detail. Biggs develops his argument through what he terms as functional knowledge, which resides within the experience of the learner, who can apply content knowledge (that accrues from research, not from personal experience) by solving problems (Biggs, 1999).

For students to learn effectively, they need to draw on disciplinary knowledge, as well as procedural and skill-based knowledge for application in social and community contexts. In order for learning to be effective and knowledge to be functional, critical thinking and purposeful reflection, individually and in groups, should lead to deep learning and problem solving skills that allow learners to turn service activities into learning activities.

2.7.6 Cultural diversity and inclusion

The ideal of civic engagement seems essential to a democratic society. However, this has become increasingly complex in a diverse democratic society such as South Africa where communities are multicultural with significant social and cultural differences in and among groups. According to Checkoway (2001:127) *“students must be prepared to understand their own identities, communicate with people who are different from themselves, and build bridges across cultural differences in the transition to a more diverse society.”* The appreciation of different cultures and the reduction of stereotyping are therefore important goals of SL. They provide opportunities for getting to know and understand different people (Eyler and Giles, 1999). SL could prove to facilitate the most powerful common ground for diverse groups of people to talk to each other and learn together.

In South Africa most higher education institutions comprise a diverse student body but it does not imply that individual students are necessarily experiencing diversity. Even in traditional classes that include students from diverse ethnic and cultural backgrounds, students are often not provided with opportunities for real connection. SL provides that potential role to bring people from different race, cultures, and backgrounds together. Through informal conversations between people working together, they develop connections that will hopefully break down barriers and reduce negative stereotypes for increased tolerance for diversity. The development of personal relations could eventually lead to more fundamental changes in institutions and society (Rhoads, 1998; Checkoway, 2001).

2.7.7 Conclusion

Each of the above goals of SL seek to contribute to achieving the goals of the White Paper on Higher Education (1997), the latter of which calls for an academic climate which lays the foundation of a critical civil society, with a culture of critical debate, tolerance and which accommodates differences and competing interests. Through SL these goals are enhanced to achieve the critical and developmental outcomes for learners, identified in the National Qualifications Framework, while at the same time, emphasising the civic mission of the education institution.

2.8 PRINCIPLES OF GOOD PRACTICE IN SERVICE-LEARNING

Howard (1993:217-220) developed a set of principles of service-learning which are derived from a host of sources, years of involvement with curriculum-based service-learning and the input of other academic leaders as part of an evaluation of a Kellogg Foundation grant. The selected principles below provide this study with significant and important criteria for conceptualising, planning and implementing SL programmes as part of the curriculum. The principles reveal academic involvement in course-embedded SL as well as concern for academic integrity. They also promise to enhance the students' capacity to be of service in the community.

2.8.1 Academic credit for learning, not service

Credit in academic courses is given to students for demonstrating their academic learning and not for performance of the service. However, when the service is integrated into the course, the course credit is assigned for both the academic learning as well as for the utilisation of the community learning.

2.8.2 Non-compromised academic rigour

Academic learning standards in a course should be sustained when adding a service-learning component. Additional workload may instead be compensated by additional credit, but not by lowering academic expectations. Students need to learn how to use their community experience and integrate it into their disciplinary knowledge.

2.8.3 Goal-setting for student learning

Establishing learning goals for students is an indisputable and necessary part of any course. Within a service-learning paradigm it may become even more important to clarify the priorities in the service of the course goals as well as to take the best advantage of the many learning opportunities offered by the community.

2.8.4 Criteria for the selection of service placements in the community

Howard (1993:218) offers three criteria essential in all service-learning courses.

1. The range of service placements should be circumscribed by the content of the course.
2. The duration of the service must be sufficient to enable the fulfilment of learning goals.
3. The specific service activities and service contexts must have the potential to stimulate course-relevant learning.

2.8.5 Provision of mechanisms to enhance community learning

Learning activities that encourage critical reflection on and analysis of service experiences are necessary to enable community-based learning to be enhanced and to strategically bridge it with academic learning. Consequently the integration of experiential and academic learning is necessary to ensure that the service is utilised as a learning instrument.

2.8.6 Assisting students to learn how to utilize community learning

Educators can help students to develop the necessary skills needed for utilising the learning from the community by providing examples of how to successfully do so, e.g. provide them with strategies on participant-observation skills.

2.8.7 Distinctions between the student's community and classroom learning roles

Students may assume different learning roles in the classroom and in the community. These roles could become conflicting for students if mechanisms are not put in place that will provide learning direction for them in the community. This could be achieved with the support of an educator serving as mentor or supervisor, who could help them understand their expected roles in the community and in the classroom contexts. This implies that the more consistent the student's learning role in the classroom with his or her learning role in the community, the better the chances that the learning potential within each context will be realised.

2.8.8 Re-thinking educators' instructional role

During service-learning experiences students may be required to acquire course-relevant information and knowledge which are taken back into the classroom.

This presupposes that academic staff needs to reconsider their traditional instructional role of information dissemination and move towards learning facilitation and guidance.

2.8.9 Anticipation of uncertainty and variation in student learning outcomes

In service-learning courses, the variability in community service placements necessarily leads to uncertainty and less homogeneity in student learning outcomes. Even when SL students are exposed to the same assignments or tasks, the content of the class discussions may be less predictable and student papers will be less homogeneous than in courses without a community assignment.

2.8.10 Maximisation of community responsibility orientation of the course

If a SL course objective includes instilling in students a sense of community and social responsibility, then designing course learning formats and assignments that encourage a communal rather than an individual learning orientation will contribute to this objective. This could be achieved by enabling students to share and discuss their papers in class. This also conveys to them that they are resources for one another, and this message contributes to the building of commitment to community and civic duty.

2.8.11 Conclusion

This study theoretically endorses the above-mentioned principles by Howard, however, higher education institutions in S.A. face major practical implementation challenges in terms of these principles. For example, in terms of SAQA policies, how institutions are going to implement the principles of academic credit for learning, not service (2.8.1), non-compromised academic rigour (2.8.2) and goal-setting for student learning (2.8.3), requires serious preplanning in terms of given frameworks and how institutions include these in their strategic planning. This study grapples with the framework in which institutions will engage with communities (e.g. see 2.8.4 selection of service placements, 2.8.5 mechanisms to

enhance community learning and 2.8.6 assisting students in utilizing community learning.)

A further challenge is the problem of reconceptualising current practice among lecturers to develop a new SL philosophy (e.g. 2.8.7 distinguishing between students' community and classroom learning roles, 2.8.8 re-thinking educators' instructional role and anticipating the uncertainty and variation in student learning outcomes). Given these challenges it would be interesting to see to what extent higher education institutions would risk or have a mindshift in terms of Howard's principles. However, it is necessary to be conscious of and raise some of the implementation challenges and constraints that such institutions may be facing.

In the next section this context is explored in greater detail to provide an understanding of SL in higher education and to provide insights into the purposes, practices and challenges of SL in South Africa.

2.9 SERVICE-LEARNING IN THE SOUTH AFRICAN CONTEXT

2.9.1 Policy mandates

South African higher education institutions are compelled by The Education White Paper (1997), The National Plan for Higher Education (1998) as well as the Higher Education Act (1998), to become more responsive to the development needs of society by contextualising their teaching, research and service programmes. Institutionalised SL holds the potential of acting as a vehicle through which higher education institutions can meet student learning and development outcomes, engage in research and teaching that focus on the pressing social needs of local and national communities, while embracing the civic mission of institutions.

2.9.2 Understanding community service in South Africa

Service-learning, much like in the American context, seems to be an equally contested term in South Africa. The interpretations of the purpose of SL and the educational practices which reflect them, vary across a broad spectrum. In 1997 the Joint Education Trust (JET), conducted a national survey, the first of its kind, which researched the policies and practices of service programmes in South African higher education institutions. In her report on this survey, Perold (1998) indicates that the term "service-learning" is not widely used by South African

institutions, although some institutions have accepted the term SL to describe their service approach. The term “community service” is more commonly used by institutions to describe student activities in communities.

The JET study further indicates that while many international service programmes generally focus on national outreach, South African programmes are initiated within institutions. Programmes are introduced either by the institution as a whole or by individual departments and are needs-driven or use the community needs as a point of reference to influence their teaching and research (Perold and Omar, 1997).

2.9.3 Defining community service

Perold and Omar (1997:18) define service programmes in South Africa broadly as *“programmes linked to higher education which involve participants in activities designed to deliver social benefit to a particular community and which teach the participants to work jointly towards the achievement of the common goal. Participation in community service usually involves a degree of personal sacrifice in terms of time, remuneration and convenience.”* This definition suggests that the service programmes can include students who participate in either voluntary or compulsory capacity.

Judging from the above definition it is clear that service programmes in South Africa can be divided into two main categories.

- Service-learning, where educational, developmental and research outcomes are integrated in a balanced manner. In this context community outreach and extension services draw on specialised knowledge and skills of particular academic disciplines and are closely linked to the curriculum. Student internships are aimed at rendering a service and they are allocated credits for their service and learning.
- Community development projects and voluntary work by staff and students which could be co-curricular or extra-curricular, but is not necessarily integrated with research and teaching. These could be staff and students that are involved in volunteer service programmes. Included in this

category, could also be work study programmes on campus which are not tied to the curriculum as well as student placements that form integral components of curricula, but which do not aim to provide a service to communities.

2.9.4 The purpose of service-learning in higher education institutions

A broad diversity of purposes has been established for the development of a culture of service-learning in institutions of higher education in South Africa. According to Perold (1998:34) these include:

- to inculcate a sense of civic-mindedness in students and make them aware of their responsibility to make a contribution to society;
- to assist in nation building by enabling students to gain a closer understanding of the life experience of people in different communities;
- to link academic study and research to issues of development so as to influence values, attitudes and sensitise students to societal needs;
- to enable students and staff to acquire skills, knowledge and experience within a community-based context, particularly in the context of poverty or under-development; and
- to enable students to 'pay back' a debt to society, since they benefited from government funding that covers the real costs of their education.

In terms of the above it is clear that such a mixed range of purposes for service-learning could only lead to an equally diverse range of service-learning practices in institutions. Based on such practices Perold, (1998:37) indicated that the service-learning mission in higher education involved three domain activities:

- promoting a spirit of concerned, active and *democratic citizenship*;
- using the resources of higher education institutions to improve the lives of underprivileged communities through the provision of *practical services*;
- infusing the *academic curriculum* with a greater sense of relevance by engaging with difficult political, economic, environmental and social problems.

Based on this analysis it becomes apparent that few South African higher education educators really have a complete understanding of the notion of 'service-learning' in terms of these three goals. Most of the curriculum-related service programmes are based on two main goals, namely: *"to provide students with practical experience in a development context and to serve disadvantaged communities"* (Perold, 1998:42). However, the goals of *"inculcating civic-mindedness and of producing an understanding of social change do manifest themselves, but do so unevenly"*. This confirms the assumption that those service-learning programmes that are connected to the curriculum seem to focus strongly on student learning while they neglect the broader issues of social engagement and the need to develop civic awareness among students as mandated by the Education White Paper.

2.9.5 Challenges for SL implementation

Within our emerging democracy it has become apparent that many higher education institutions will face a number of challenges and barriers that could impact on the successful implementation of service-learning programmes. Some of these include:

- limited financial and human resources which could impact on teaching and research needs;
- high costs of SL programmes (particularly transport costs);
- insufficient staff time due to lack of capacity needed for co-ordination and management of programmes and supervision of students;
- staff development and training for SL work;
- the need for effective policies and systems to recognise SL as part of staff performance appraisal;
- finding suitable placements for students, especially for institutions located outside large cosmopolitan areas; and
- attitudes and mindset of higher education stakeholders such as the resistance by staff and students (Perold, 1998: 61-63).

These factors may become important when considering how to address the challenges and barriers to the institutionalisation of SL. The implementation of SL

requires gathering the support from people throughout the campus community, and this involves administrative support, academic staff involvement, adequate funding for SL initiatives, and familiarity with course-based service. Moving SL from the periphery to the core, and from idea to practice, requires support from the leadership to address these challenges while understanding the complexities of the organisational context as well as the extent of academic staff duties.

2.10 THE VALUE OF SERVICE-LEARNING FOR ALL STAKEHOLDERS

In reviewing the literature to research the benefits of service-learning the positive responses were overwhelming (Checkoway, 2001; Cruz and Giles, 2000; Eyler and Giles, 1999; Howard, 1993; Stanton et al., 1999; Perold, 1998). These researchers found that participation in SL programmes certainly hold benefits for all role-players.

2.10.1 Benefits for students

Service-learning proves to be a meaningful teaching and learning model that:

- enhances academic learning;
- provides active rather than passive learning situations;
- builds human empathy and enhances racial and ethnic tolerance;
- offers learners new learning paradigms as well as a chance to try out new learner and instructor roles;
- provides opportunities for developing real world skills and real world knowledge;
- develops work readiness skills such as teamwork, leadership, critical thinking and the ability to analyse and synthesise information;
- exposes students to community needs and problems;
- develops a sense of public awareness and civic responsibility in youth; and
- encourages self-reflection and student self-direction.

2.10.2 Benefits for higher education institutions

Service-learning also holds benefits for institutions that include:

- re-engaging institutions of higher learning with communities;

- bridging the town/gown gap with communities viewing students and academic staff in a more positive light;
- forging new relationships with communities which allow them to develop new ways of teaching and research based on community needs;
- providing a means whereby institutions can contribute to society through the application of the knowledge and skills of the academy; and
- developing socially relevant curricula and a progressive and socially responsible approach to human resource development.

2.10.3 Benefits to the community

Cruz and Giles (2000) identified a lack of research on the community dimensions of SL and subsequently used a participatory action research approach to establish how service-learning contributes to community development. In their analysis they found that service-learning:

- provides research data for accessing government or private funding for services for disadvantaged communities;
- strengthens links by providing networks among community agencies;
- provides opportunities for job training, skills enhancement, and ongoing education;
- builds group problem solving capacity in community members;
- brings community members together and builds trust among them;
- strengthens relationships and builds partnerships that can provide access to institutional resources, consultation and technical assistance;
- enables the community to gauge institution's attitude towards their needs;
- facilitates the use of 'free labour' using students with varying skills and expertise; and
- plays a role in the preparation of future professionals.

Based on the value and advantages of SL for institutions, students and communities, greater effort is needed for institutionalising SL practice in mainstream higher education. In order to support and develop SL as a coherent and co-ordinated part of the curriculum, institutional infrastructure and processes need to be put in place. Institutional capacity will have to be developed and the

service culture needs to be transformed. Since SL practitioners in the United States has grappled for many years with issues of practice, such as how to sustain relationships with community partners, how to integrate service with disciplinary study, and how to institutionalise such programmes, we could learn much from their experiences and research.

2.11 LESSONS FROM THE USA CONTEXTS

There are a number of lessons that we can derive from the USA, as there are some parallels between the USA and South Africa. The social unrest of the 1960s placed demands on American universities to become socially relevant and responsive to the needs of the poor. Higher education was forced to reassess, re-examine and redefine its central mission. In the same way the goals of the White Paper on Higher Education (1997) and the NCHE report (1996) call for greater responsiveness to the social and economic reconstruction and development of communities and the country at large.

In the USA higher education presidents and deans consciously set out to encourage and support the institutionalisation of SL. This was achieved through the establishment of Campus Compact, a coalition of college and university presidents committed to SL. There are currently 575 member campuses participating in Campus Compact (Eyler and Giles, 1999). The Corporation for National Service is also continually researching the popularity of SL to remain informed and report on data. In 1984 college students formed COOL (Campus Outreach Opportunity League) with the mission to educate and empower students to strengthen the nation through service. In addition the American Association for Higher Education (AAHE) has made SL a major focus of annual conferences to encourage continuous research on present models, theory and syllabi for SL in particular disciplines. Hence the number of publications in the field, both in articles and books, has risen to hundreds. Since 1994 the SL field now also has its own journal (Checkoway, 2001; Stanton, 1999; Eyler and Giles, 1999). In South Africa we perhaps need to move SL from its marginal status to the academic centre of the institution and campus leadership could start this process by consciously encouraging and promoting SL in the same way as USA institutional leadership and professional associations did.

Moreover, in South Africa a greater understanding is required of how to synthesise research and teaching in the same way that service and learning are integrated. Although such efforts have not yet been demonstrated in a significant way within South Africa, there are a number of higher education institutions that are running highly successful SL programmes, even though most of them are located within individual departments. We can look to the institutionalised models of the USA and learn much from their holistic approach that could help us overcome the shortcomings of the current, fragmented SL efforts in South Africa.

2.12 CONCLUSION

In reviewing the literature it has become apparent that in South Africa we have common issues and questions regarding service-learning as in the USA and for this reason this study may be a necessary step towards furthering research in service-learning practice. We need, however, to deepen our understanding of SL and provoke greater inquiry into its potential as well as its limitations. But more importantly, we need consensus with regard to the domain of SL as an educational philosophy with its peculiar epistemology, and become more involved in the current paradigm debate surrounding SL. Service-learning may still be fraught with the same lack of clarity and contestation of the parameters of community service and service-learning, as in some cases in the USA. However, we have a distinct advantage in that we have the research and learning from past attempts to implement related reforms from the USA to draw from. We also have vibrant community contexts and real social needs and we have the mandate of the Higher Education Act and NCHE to support our efforts.

In the following chapter the research design and methodology for this study will be discussed.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter outlined the various conceptualisations of service-learning practice as they emerged in another part of the world e.g. U.S.A. Essentially the purpose of this research is to understand SL in its operational context in South Africa. It is generally acknowledged that research is not a neutral term. There are different concepts of research depending on the nature and purpose of the research. In the social sciences research could be defined as a systematic approach to (a) *"identifying relationships of variables representing concepts (constructs) and or (b) determining differences between or among groups in their standing on one or more variables of interest"* (Isaac and Micheal, 1997:2). This implies that research is a carefully prescribed process of collecting and analysing data in a way that is systematic, purposeful, and accountable.

This chapter explores aspects of existing research paradigms in an effort to locate the present study in a paradigmatic sense and attempts to show how this informs the methodological choices made. The research method (case study), data collection techniques, data analysis process and quality criteria are discussed.

3.2 RESEARCH PARADIGMS

Research is often conducted within a particular paradigm. To investigate the research question it is necessary to explore the different research paradigms in order to locate this study in the appropriate paradigm. According to Kuhn (in Sarantakos, 1998:32) a paradigm *"is a set of beliefs, values and techniques which is shared by members of a scientific community, and which acts as a guide or map, dictating the kinds of problems scientists should address and the types of explanations that are acceptable to them."* However, this view of paradigm was used very widely in certain contexts while very narrowly in others. For some social scientists phenomenology, feminism, postmodernism, ethnography, hermeneutics are just some of the paradigms engaged in. For other social scientists there are essentially two paradigms, viz. the positivist and postpositivist paradigms.

Because postpositivism is too general, many social scientists prefer to speak about the positivist and interpretive (or naturalist) paradigms. This model was later expanded to include critical theory as a third paradigm (Sarantakos, 1998).

The positivist, interpretive and critical theories essentially embody the three major paradigms that provide a theoretical basis for the methodologies employed in the social sciences. Each of these paradigms can be clearly distinguished by the research principles they employ and their proposed guidelines on acceptable research practices. The methodologies that result from these paradigms consist of the quantitative and qualitative methodology. Quantitative methodology is based on the positivist philosophy as explained below, while qualitative methodology is associated with many diverse methods employed in the social sciences.

A detailed discussion of the nature, types or legitimacy of each paradigm is beyond the scope of this study, but a brief description of each paradigm, based on the basic principles and methodological basis will be explored.

3.2.1 Positivism

Positivism is the oldest theory in the social sciences and forms the basis of research. Positivists define reality as everything that can be perceived through the senses. They are generally concerned with how things really are and how they really work. Science is based on strict rules and procedures, fundamentally different from speculation and common sense. They view science as deductive, proceeding from general/abstract to specific/concrete; it is based on universal causal laws which are used to explain concrete social events and relationships. Science is about separating facts from values. Their purpose is to discover the “true” nature of reality by measuring and quantifying in laboratories. The ultimate aim is to “predict” and “control” natural phenomena. Knowledge consists of verified hypotheses that can be accepted as facts or laws (Sarantakos, 1998).

3.2.2 Critical Theory

According to Guba and Lincoln (in Denzin and Lincoln, 1998) the aim of inquiry in this paradigm is the critique and transformation of the social, political, cultural, economic, ethnic and gender structures that constrain and exploit humankind. This

paradigm has a fundamental interest in radically changing human existence and developing a self-consciousness and understanding of existing social and political conditions that will empower people to liberate themselves. Critical scientists see in social research the goals of removing false beliefs and ideas about society and social reality, and are critical of the power systems and inequality structures that dominate and oppress people in societies. People are perceived as creators of their own destiny, while engagement and action are encouraged for the purpose of changing the conditions of people's lives (Sarantakos, 1998).

3.2.3 Interpretivism

Interpretivism aims to move away from obtaining knowledge through experimental manipulation of human subjects, towards understanding by means of conversations with subjects. According to Greene, (in Denzin and Lincoln, 1998:384), social reality is viewed as socially constructed, *"based on a constant process of interpretation and reinterpretation of the intentional, meaningful behaviour of people – including the researcher's"*. The aim of inquiry is thus understanding and reconstruction of the constructions that subjects, including the researcher hold, aiming toward consensus but still open to new interpretations as information and sophistication improves. The criterion for progress is that over time, everyone formulates more informed and sophisticated constructions and becomes more aware of the content and meaning of competing constructions (Sarantakos, 1998).

According to Guba and Lincoln (in Denzin and Lincoln, 1998) the basic beliefs that define each of these inquiry paradigms can be summarised according to responses to three fundamental questions, namely, the ontological, epistemological and methodological questions. In order to highlight their usefulness and characteristics, each paradigm and the assumptions they make about the nature of social reality in terms of these three questions, will be briefly described. The basic beliefs that proponents of each of the above paradigms might take with respect to the three paradigm-defining questions, is summarised in Table 2 below:

Table 2: Basic beliefs of Inquiry Paradigms

Question	Positivism	Critical Inquiry	Interpretivism
Ontology	Realism – apprehendable reality exist	Historical realism – virtual reality shaped by social, political, cultural, economic and gender values; crystallised over time	Relativism – local and specific constructed realities
Epistemology	Dualist and objectivist; values and biases are prevented from influencing outcomes; findings true	Transactional and subjectivist; value-mediated findings	Transactional/ subjectivist; Created findings
Methodology	Experimental/ manipulative; verification of hypotheses; chiefly quantitative methods	Dialogic/dialectical Dialogue between inquirer and subjects must be dialectical to transform ignorance and misapprehensions	Hermeneutical/ dialectical Individual constructions can be elicited and refined only through interaction between and among investigator and respondents.

(Guba and Lincoln, 1998)

Although the boundaries between these paradigms could be seen as stark and incompatible, it must be kept in mind that many of the principles of natural science could be borrowed and used in social science. They should thus be viewed as fluid interpretations that are not absolute or right or wrong, but should rather be seen in terms of more or less useful paradigms to achieve the purpose of the research. They are useful because they make us aware of the multidimensionality of social research.

However, the differences between these three positions have significant consequences for the practical conduct of inquiry, as well as for the interpretation of findings. Methodologically, interpretivism is most consonant with natural settings such as case studies, with the investigator being the primary data gatherer and interpreter of meaning, using qualitative methods.

3.3 QUALITATIVE METHODOLOGY

For the purpose of this study it is useful to note that the interpretivist paradigm essentially frames and guides this study, locating it within a qualitative case study. The aim of interpretive research is not just to develop an explanatory theory which can predict outcomes, but rather to encourage understanding. In the case of interpretive analysis, Terre Blanche and Kelly (1999) argue that the purpose of data analysis is to provide "thick description" of the phenomenon that is being studied. This would involve a thorough description of the characteristics, processes, transactions and contexts that constitute this description.

In qualitative research the researcher engages in an intensive, holistic picture, by analysing data and reports detailed views of informants obtained during interviews and observations (Cresswell, 1998). The most distinctive characteristic of qualitative inquiry is its emphasis on interpretation, as encountered in case study research.

3.4 CASE STUDY RESEARCH

Rossman & Rallis (1998:70) define case studies as *"explorations of a single entity or phenomenon. They seek to understand a larger phenomenon through close examination of a specific case and therefore focus on the particular case"*.

Merriam (1998) furthermore argues that the case study design has proved particularly useful to gain an in-depth understanding of a situation and meaning for those involved. The interest is in the process rather than outcomes, in context rather than a specific variable, in discovery rather than confirmation.

The researcher usually studies a case systematically, records what is happening but simultaneously examines its meaning and redirects observations to refine or substantiate those meanings (Stake, 1995). Case studies could be descriptive, holistic and inductive. Description illustrates the complexities of a situation, provides vivid material and presents differing perspectives or opinions. They are holistic because they study phenomena in detail, rather than dealing with isolated factors. They also draw on inductive processes in which themes and categories emerge through analysis of data collected through a variety of techniques. Samples are usually small and they are purposively selected.

In this study the research is concentrated on seeking to understand the SL context, its purpose and complexities surrounding SL practice within a single department within the Faculty of Health Sciences of the University Stellenbosch. Stake (in Denzin and Lincoln, 1998) states that different researchers have various purposes for studying cases. He identifies the following types of case study:

- intrinsic case study;
- instrumental case study; and
- collective case study.

This research study attempts to utilize the instrumental case study because “ a *particular case is examined to provide insight into an issue or refinement of theory. The case is of secondary interest; it plays a supportive role, facilitating our understanding of something else. The case may be seen as typical of other cases or not. The choice of case is made because it is expected to advance our understanding of that other interest*” (Stake, in Denzin and Lincoln, 1998:88). The Occupational Therapy department is engaged as instrumental case study to provide insight into how SL is conceptualised, planned and executed within the department. The case is further explored to gain greater clarity of how SL should be planned, implemented and managed as an institution-wide initiative.

According to the criteria proposed by Cresswell (1998), several features mark this research as a case study:

- The case for the study is identified, i.e. the OT department within the Faculty of Health Sciences, its final year students as well as various community stakeholders involved in the SL programme.
- The case is a bounded system, bounded by a specific topic, by time (6 months data generation) and place (a single department with a faculty).
- Multiple sources of information (i.e. structured questionnaires and semi-structured interviews) are used in data generation to provide a detailed account of the SL programme.

3.4.1 Basis for selection of this case

Denscombe (1998:30-31) suggests the following reasons as a basis for the selection of an instrumental case study:

- *Spotlight on one instance:* The focus is on the investigation of service-learning in one context. The aim is to illuminate the general by focusing on the particular. In this case the focus is on the OT department to provide insights into its current SL practices that could illuminate the key elements, goals and principles of SL.
- *In-depth study:* Efforts are focused on studying in detail how SL is conceptualised, planned, implemented and monitored at all levels in this particular case.
- *Focus on relationships and processes:* The real value of a case study is that it explains why certain outcomes might occur instead of just finding out what those outcomes are. The focus in this study was on the relationship between the SL practices and how they relate to the key elements, principles and goals of SL.
- *Natural setting:* The “case” that forms the basis of the investigation existed already before the start of the research inquiry and was not artificially created for the purposes of this research study.

- *Multiple sources and multiple methods:* The case study approach allows the researcher to use a variety of sources, a variety of types of data and a variety of research methods as part of the investigation. This particular study used a questionnaire to provide information of students' perceptions, experiences, feelings and opinions. Another source of data was the semi-structured interviews with various stakeholders involved in the SL project.

Due to the variety of service-learning programmes deployed in South African higher education institutions, these programmes operate according to different goals, purposes and interpretations. The OT department was selected as a case study because of its curriculum-related service activities in the community. As a case study it explores opportunities to understand the purpose, goals, principles and operationalisation of SL as well as its value to all those involved in the SL programme. The case itself is of secondary interest but nevertheless facilitates our understanding of the notion of SL and guides us in terms of future planning, implementation, management and monitoring of such activities. For this reason the case study is investigated in depth. Its context is scrutinised in order to detail its practices of SL as well as the experiences, perceptions and opinions of all stakeholders involved in the SL programme.

It had been difficult to select a number of cases collectively within the Faculty of Health Sciences, due to a lack of uniformity of the various health departments within the faculty. The OT department was the only department that physically goes out into the community to perform service activities.

3.4.2 Advantages of the case study approach

Denscombe (1998) suggests the following advantages of case studies:

- Case studies focus on one or a few instances which allows the researcher to deal with the subtleties and intricacies of complex social situations. The analysis is holistic rather than based on isolated factors.
- They allow the use of a variety of research methods and they encourage the use of multiple methods in order to capture the complex reality under scrutiny.

- They foster the use of multiple sources of data. This facilitates the validation of data through triangulation.
- The approach is particularly suitable where the researcher has little or no control over events. The phenomena are studied as they naturally occur.
- They fit in well with the needs of small-scale research through concentrating effort on one research site.

3.4.3 Disadvantages of the case study approach

Like all other research strategies, the use of case studies also has its limitations.

Denscombe (1998) lists the following disadvantages:

- The case study approach is most vulnerable to criticism in terms of the credibility of generalizations made from its findings.
- Case studies are often accused of lacking the degree of rigour expected of social science research. Case studies are viewed as focusing on processes rather than measurable end products, as relying on qualitative data and interpretive methods rather than quantitative data and statistical procedures.
- It might be more difficult to define the boundaries of the case.
- Negotiating access to case study settings might be a demanding part of the research process. Access to people, documents and settings could be problematic in terms of ethical implications.

3.4.4 Validity and reliability of case studies

There are researchers who may criticise case studies in terms of the following questions:

- How representative is the case?
- How unique are the findings to the particular circumstances of the case?
- How valid and reliable is the generalisability on the basis of one case?

Denscombe (1998) argues that although each case is in some respects unique, it is also a single example of a broader class of things. He further elaborates that the extent to which findings from the case study can be generalized to other examples

in the class depends on how far the case study example is similar to others of its type.

Lincoln and Guba (in Merriam, 1991:165) furthermore argue that, in terms of validity and reliability of case studies, *"it is difficult to talk about the validity and reliability of an experiment as a whole, but one can talk about the validity and reliability of instrumentation, the appropriateness of data analysis techniques, the degree of relationship between the conclusions drawn and the data upon which they presumably rest and so on"*.

Validity and reliability are primarily considered for the individual techniques that are used. This is based on the assumption implicit in the quotation that if the individual techniques were reliable and valid, then so too was the case study.

Although the primary emphasis of the research is on understanding the case itself, certain responses and themes have repeatedly surfaced through the questionnaires and interviews and specific conclusions are drawn from the results of the data. According to Stake (1995) this in itself is a generalization and increasingly these generalizations will be modified until a refinement of understanding is reached.

3.5 DATA GENERATION TECHNIQUES

In order to generate relevant information, appropriate data gathering sources have to be identified. Three sources are identified, viz. the Occupational Therapy students, the head of the OT department who represents the institution, and various community stakeholders involved in the SL programme. Permission to use this department for research purposes had been obtained from the head of the OT department. (The letter providing this permission is included as Appendix A).

This research consists of two data generation techniques, namely an open-ended questionnaire and semi-structured interviews. It was decided to use these research techniques in order to obtain as much information as possible from the relevant stakeholders.

3.5.1 The questionnaire as data generation technique

According to Denscombe, (1998) there are many types of questionnaires. However, to qualify as a research questionnaire, it should:

- be designed to collect information that could be used subsequently as data for analysis. The purpose of a research questionnaire is not to change people's attitudes or provide them with information, but rather to discover things;
- consist of a written list of questions. An identical set of questions allows for precision and consistency in terms of the wording of the questions; and
- gather information by asking people directly about the points concerned with the research.

In the case of this research study the questionnaire was designed and administered to determine the purpose, experiences, attitudes, perceptions and opinions of the students in terms of their SL involvement. Given the fact that the questionnaire data was collected without direct contact between the respondents and myself, it was also a way to determine whether their SL involvement in the community projects in any way helped them to develop a greater sense of civic awareness and social responsibility towards the community.

The questionnaire was self-administered and anonymous. The decision to use a questionnaire rather than interviews in this instance was taken for logistical reasons. It would have been difficult to meet with thirty-two students face-to-face because they start their service learning activities in the community at 8h00 in the morning until midday, after which they return to the campus for their academic lectures which lasts until 17h00 in the afternoon. In order to get as much information as possible I wished to include all students in the survey. However, the number of students was too large for one researcher to interview within a limited time. In order to ensure honesty and reliability the questionnaire was anonymous, the purpose of the study was clearly explained and students were given ample time to fill out and return the questionnaire.

3.5.1.1 Questionnaire design

The questionnaire was designed to be self-administered for logistical reasons. It was not possible for the researcher to personally contact and administer the questionnaire to all the students involved. The response to a self-administered questionnaire would have been more likely to be lower than that achieved with direct administration. It was assumed though, that all respondents would have no difficulty in reading the questionnaire, or understanding and interpreting the questions based on the fact that respondents are all final year higher education students and have engaged in the processes of service-learning.

3.5.1.2 Constructing the questions

The questionnaire contained clear instructions for completing the questions and was accompanied by an introductory letter. The questions designed were open-ended although they included questions about both fact and opinion (Babbie, 1998). The first five questions demanded factual information and required respondents to reveal information about the type of SL activity that they were involved in, to describe what they do, with whom and how long they were doing it (see Appendix C). The rest of the questions were open-ended to cater for their opinions, experiences, attitudes and feelings.

Respondents were asked to express opinions in a way that calls for critical thinking about what it is that they do rather than mere reporting facts. These questions were designed to establish whether their SL activities were based on the key elements, principles and goals of SL as described in the literature review. The purpose of the questions was therefore to determine whether the relationship between the institution, students and community included elements of reciprocity and collaboration between partners, the acknowledgement of Mode 2 knowledge (applied in its social context), reflection on their SL activities and also to establish whether their SL activities were credit bearing. The questions were structured so that they would cover all vital information pertaining to the research.

3.5.1.3 The format of the questions

The questionnaire was spread out and attempted to be uncluttered to avoid misinterpretation of the questions. The questions were relevant to the knowledge and experience of the respondents as they were all involved in SL activities in the community. The instructions on the questionnaire were carefully designed, as they were intended for self-administration. The covering letter indicated the purpose of the research and that the questionnaire was anonymous (Appendix B).

Great care was taken with the wording of the questions to ensure that they were completely unambiguous and to avoid any vagueness (Denscombe, 1998). Questions have been kept as short and straightforward to avoid confusion and prevent wasting time. The layout of the questionnaire on the open-ended questions included 11 items which respondents had to reflect on. Respondents were requested to answer all questions on the questionnaire. The questions generally probed respondents' opinions in terms of the purpose of service learning, the knowledge, skills and experiences gained, their contributions to the communities that they served; how they have benefited from their SL experiences, and whether they have developed a sense of civic awareness or social responsibility towards the communities that they served.

3.5.1.4 Pilot testing the questionnaire

After the final questionnaire draft was completed, a pilot test was conducted (Babbie, 1998). The questionnaire was given to three colleagues to check for spelling or typographical errors, clarity of instructions, questions and responses. Although they did not comprise a representative sample, they were nevertheless people who were familiar with the notion of SL. After feedback, minor changes were made. The pilot test indicated that the questionnaire could be completed within 20 minutes, at most.

3.5.1.5 Disadvantages of postal questionnaires

Postal questionnaires are easier to arrange than personal interviews to cover as many respondents as possible. However, due to lack of personal interaction with the researcher, the response rate could generally be poor. Furthermore,

incomplete or poorly completed answers might affect the validity of the research, as postal questionnaires offer little opportunity for the researcher to check the truthfulness of answers given by respondents. The researcher thus has no way of probing for clues or challenging incongruity between answers and this is even more true in the case of anonymous questionnaires. In the case of this study, it was necessary to send a follow up questionnaire to students, as the response rate was initially poor. However, with the assistance and encouragement of the OT department, the response rate improved significantly after the follow up questionnaire.

3.5.2 The interview as data generation technique

Stake (1995) argues that the two main uses of case studies are to obtain the descriptions and interpretations of others. The interview is an important means to discover multiple realities within a case study. In the case of this research, the aim was to discover and portray the multiple views of the participants within the case.

Erlandson, Harris, Skipper and Allen, (1993) describe the interview method as a conversation with a purpose. Denscombe (1998) however, argues that interviews involve a set of assumptions and understandings about a situation which are not normally associated with a casual conversation. They help the researcher to understand and put into a larger context the interpersonal, social and cultural aspects of the environment. According to Bless and Higson-Smith (1995) the interview is a direct way of obtaining information because the participants are obliged to answer questions while in a discussion with the interviewer. For this reason it was found that the interview was an appropriate technique because it assists to probe for more specific answers to clarify and eradicate any misunderstandings.

Interviews can be structured, semi-structured or unstructured, but generally only the last two are used in qualitative research. In this study, the one-to-one semi-structured interview was selected because it allowed the researcher to be guided by a set of basic questions and issues without having to use the exact wording or determine the order of the questions ahead of time (Erlandson et al., 1993). Semi-structured interviews also allowed interviewees to use their own words and

develop their own thoughts while they allowed the researcher to 'discover' meaning through in-depth investigations of experiences and feelings rather than 'checking' (Denscombe, 1998:113).

3.5 2.1 Advantages and disadvantages of interviews

Like all data generation techniques, interviews have their strengths and limitations. According to Denscombe, (1998) interviews are a good method for producing data which deal with topics in depth. They assist the researcher to probe key informants' feelings, opinions, ideas and meanings they attach and in this way gain valuable insights based on the depth of the information gathered. Interviews are generally flexible and data can be checked for accuracy and relevance as they are collected. They allow the researcher to continuously assess and evaluate the information by redirecting, probing and summarising the information.

However, interviews tend to be time-consuming and difficult as semi-structured interviews generally produce non-standard responses. Data are not pre-coded and have a relatively open format as in the case of this research. Consistency and objectivity are often hard to achieve because the data produced are unique due to the specific context and the specific individuals involved. This could have an adverse effect on reliability. Furthermore, the data are based on what people say rather than what they do and this may not always reflect the truth. To interview people tend to be costly and time-consuming. For this reason the number of interviewees selected for this research was generally small.

3.5.2.2 The interview process

Purposive sampling of interview respondents was done to ensure representivity and because respondents were considered prime sources. These are likely to produce the most valuable data (Denscombe, 1998). Purposive sampling was also chosen to maximise discovery of the heterogeneous patterns, themes and problems that occur in this particular context (Erlandson, et al., 1993). The interview respondents were selected because of their involvement with the planning, development, implementation and monitoring of the community project. The head of the OT department was selected on the basis that she represents the

institution (The University of Stellenbosch) and generally has an overall knowledge of how the SL project is conducted, managed and monitored in the field.

In the case of the community stakeholders involved in the service-learning project, in-depth semi-structured interviews were conducted with the following persons:

- The full-time occupational therapist as head of the community project, which had been initiated by the OT department of the University of Stellenbosch.
- Four community volunteers who had been trained by the students to present stimulation programmes to children with learning problems.
- The chairperson of the community project, who is also one of the six school principals involved in the project, and who monitors the overall progress of the project.

Interview schedules (see table 3 below) were semi-structured in order to allow respondents to enter into discussion about issues important to them that relates to the research questions. Although the interviews were audio-tape recorded, it was found that the interview protocols were useful as they enabled the researcher to take notes during the interview about the responses of the interviewees (Cresswell, 1998). They also helped to organise the researcher's thoughts, to stay focused on the research questions, to follow up on responses to questions and to probe some of the answers of respondents.

Table 3: Interview schedule for individual semi-structured interviews

<p>Interview protocol</p> <p>Topic: How effectively is service-learning planned, implemented and monitored in the community, using the key elements, principles and goals of SL.</p> <p>Position of the interviewee:</p> <p>Questions in the interview:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is your role in the community project (Project Volcano)? • Tell me how the project started? • Explain your relationship with the OT students and how do you work together? • How has the community benefited by working together with the institution and the students? • How have the students and the institution benefited from their involvement in the community?
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3.6 DATA ANALYSIS

Data analysis is about making sense of the thick or dense descriptions and other data collected. Through the analysis of questionnaires and interview transcriptions, data content is reduced, interpreted and conclusions are finally drawn and verified.

3.6.1 Questionnaires

An open coding system was used to analyse the questionnaires because of the open-ended nature of the questions. Content was analysed by organising information and identifying patterns, which were then divided into categories based on concepts, words or phrases. Further sub-categories, common themes and ideas were extracted and analysed and finally conclusions were drawn and verified (Strauss and Corbin, 1990).

3.6.2 Interviews

Transcriptions were made of all audio-tape recordings (see appendix D). These transcriptions were used for data analysis, supplemented by memos made during and directly after each interview. Member checking and discussing transcriptions and interpretations of interviews were done with most of the participants. However, the notes and memos made during and after interviews were not passed to participants, but were often triangulated with follow-up conversations, checked against earlier notes or interview data.

3.7 VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY IN THE RESEARCH PROCESS

Lather (1986) cautions that we need to be systematic about establishing the trustworthiness of data. One way of improving the trustworthiness of data is through triangulation. Triangulation refers to the use of multiple investigators, multiple sources of data or multiple methods of data collection to confirm the emerging data (Merriam, 1991) or to check one's own perspective against. The inclusion of multiple sources of data collection in this research was a way of increasing the trustworthiness and reliability of the study.

In this study triangulation of different data sources and methods such as questionnaires, interviews with different individuals, observation memos and continuous reference to the literature study, was done during various stages of the research process to ensure trustworthiness. Questionnaires were piloted with three colleagues which also served as a form of triangulation. This allowed the researcher to cross-check perspectives and findings throughout the data collection phase. During the final data analysis phase triangulation was further used to support findings in the form of a peer check.

3.8 CONCLUSION

This chapter discussed the case study as a research method and attempted to capture the data collection techniques and data analysis process as reliably and authentically as possible. This chapter furthermore provides a broad framework of the data generation and data analysis process. In chapter 4 follows a description of the research findings in greater detail followed by an analysis and discussion of the results.

CHAPTER 4

PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF RESEARCH FINDINGS

4.1 INTRODUCTION TO THE NOTION OF DATA ANALYSIS

This chapter proposes to present the research findings and analyse them in the light of the research question as described in Chapter 1.

According to Kirby and McKenna (1989:128) the act of analysis and making sense of the data involves *“organising mass of data into manageable parts to make sense of each category and of each category’s relation to the whole research project.”* In the case of interpretive analysis, Terre Blanch and Kelly (1999:124) mention that *“thick description”* of data *“relies on first-hand accounts, tries to describe what it sees in rich detail and presents its findings in engaging and sometimes evocative language.”* Interpretive data analysis is therefore not merely a mechanical process that involves fixed rules to follow, but is rather an open process of engaging with the data in a critical attitude of enquiry.

4.2 DYNAMICS OF QUALITATIVE DATA ANALYSIS

According to Becker (1986) qualitative researchers often lack systematic procedures because they have to rely on anecdotal data. For this reason the authors present analytic induction as an alternative to qualitative analysis. Analytic induction encompasses the following:

- systematic procedures;
- sequential analysis; and
- production of well-founded analytic propositions.

The process of qualitative data analysis essentially entails a systematic procedure that indicates all relevant items, through a process of loose but inclusive coding. However, Becker (1986) moreover regard the search for negative case analysis as being equally significant in reaching conclusions.

Glaser and Strauss (1967) are furthermore of the opinion that research designs cannot just be *“taken off the shelf”*, because data analysis is an iterative, inductive

process towards establishing greater clarity. According to these authors data is usually induced as a result of emerging ideas or themes which, in turn, feed into and modify the processes involved in data collection. They view coding as a fundamental part of data reduction. Such a coding process is usually divided into first- and second level analysis. Pattern codes generally embedded in second level analysis, would typically concentrate on:

- themes;
- causes/ explanations;
- relationships among people; and
- theoretical constructs.

Essentially a system of pattern coding supports a more efficient process of verification, in order to check for common biases such as over-emphasis on dramatic incidents and mistakes of co-occurrence in causal relationships. Verification in this regard is thus an important mechanism to check for representativeness of data, but more importantly, it seeks to replicate key findings and establish negative evidence. This should be a transparent process which allows the reader greater clarity of purpose and to proceed to the stage of secondary analysis.

The description of the data analysis process for this research is based on the research tasks as described in Chapter 3. The research tasks have been performed repeatedly, and move in an upward spiral through the various levels of analysis. They include:

- the organisation of information and identification of emerging themes, trends and patterns;
- the development of ideas; and
- verification of conclusions.

The above categories have served as the basis for the data analysis in this study.

4.3 THE RESEARCH PROCESS

The main purpose of this study is to establish how service-learning has been conceptualised, planned, implemented and assessed in the OT department of the University of Stellenbosch as stated in Chapter 1. This was determined through two processes involved in this research, namely the completion of a questionnaire by the OT students and by conducting semi-structured interviews with the head of the OT department and various other community stakeholders. Thirty-two questionnaires were sent out to the OT final year students, of which twenty-two students responded.

The results of the questionnaire are presented first, followed by the results of the interviews. That is followed by a discussion of the analysis of the results.

In this study data analysis occurred at various levels. During the first-level data analysis the purpose was merely to gain an understanding of the SL context within the OT department and reflect on the reading and reporting process. During the first interview with the head of the OT department, very little interpretation occurred in terms of data collected. During further interviews with other respondents, a very superficial interpretation of the data already indicated some broad trends. The purpose of the initial reading of the questionnaire responses focused on gaining clarity. Responses aimed to produce a working set of codes, descriptive naming and classification of categories.

The second-level analysis of data aimed to identify categories and the pattern codes that emerged from the questionnaire responses and the interview transcriptions. I will now proceed with the analysis of the questionnaire as conducted with the OT students.

4.4 PRESENTATION OF QUESTIONNAIRE FINDINGS

The questionnaire (attached as appendix C) was framed in terms of questions that relate to the research question, which essentially aimed to determine how service-learning was conceptualised, planned, implemented and assessed in the OT department, in terms of the key elements, goals, principles and value of SL. The questions were scrutinized to identify the broad categories of items that emerged

from the questions to prevent any possible exclusion of data. The following ten categories were identified:

- purpose of service-learning;
- mastery of content;
- skills for future career;
- community benefits;
- institutional benefits;
- assessment of service-learning activities;
- constraints during SL performance;
- external factors;
- future recommendations; and
- meaningful experiences.

Each category was analysed which resulted in subsequent coding of themes and patterns. The diagram below reflects a summary of the ten categories and the themes that emerged from the analysis of the questionnaire.

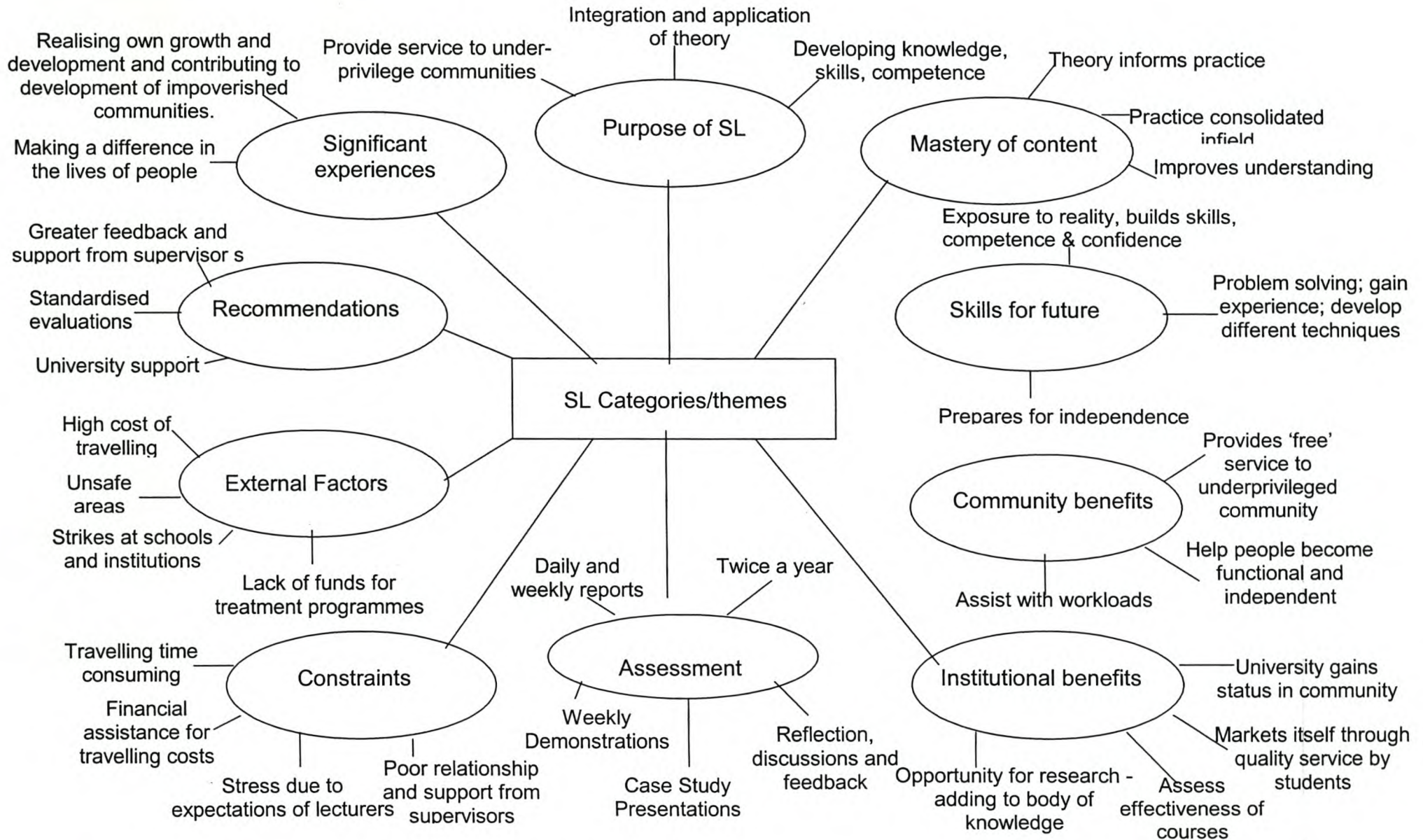


Figure 4: Summary of SL categories and themes

4.4.1 Classification of themes

A deeper level of coding of all responses under each category assisted with the reduction and contextualisation of data. The aim was to go beyond the responses offered by the respondents and to identify a higher-level of themes. The classification of the themes under each category during second-level analysis will be discussed and illustrated with examples from the data. The discussion proceeds in terms of the broad categories as extracted from the questionnaire conducted with respondents.

4.4.1.1 Themes related to the purpose of service-learning

Of the twenty-two respondents, a significantly high number of respondents indicated that the purpose of SL involves the integration and application of theory. Most respondents viewed the purpose of SL as a means to gain practical experience in the field and indicated that it is a way of developing skills and knowledge. These emerged as the three most significant responses to the purpose of service-learning. Other respondents indicated that the purpose was to provide a service in underprivileged communities, to work with people and to deal with real life situations. There was no significant difference between the responses in the identified themes.

Some of the significant responses in this category included:

- SL provides the opportunity to apply theoretical knowledge in the OT field.
- It is important to learn in service because it is the only way to develop competence.
- To develop the necessary skills and experience in real-world contexts.
- It is about learning through experience.
- We provide a service to underprivileged communities while developing practical skills.

4.4.1.2 Themes related to mastery of course content

In order to determine whether SL supported the mastery of course content there was a diverse range of themes that emerged. A number of respondents indicated that practice informed theory and that theory was consolidated in the field of

occupational therapy. A few respondents further indicated that they learnt much more by working under the direct supervision of a clinical therapist in the field as well as from their lecturers. Some of the meaningful comments in this category included:

- conditions in the field are very different from textbook cases;
- work with realities in the communities;
- theory is meaningless without practice in reality;
- hands-on practical experience was of far greater value than only textbook theory;
- exposed to various situations and diagnosis; and
- learn skills such as problem solving, handling difficult situations, management skills and functions and to manage specific kinds of problems.

Although the type of responses from respondents in this category was very similar to each other there were, however, two respondents who indicated that practical exposure does not cover all the theoretical areas and therefore prevents them from fully mastering all areas of theory.

4.4.1.3 Themes related to skills for future career

Many of the responses in this category overlapped with the previous themes (see 4.4.1.2) and respondents often stated “same as number 2”, i.e. they develop skills through hands-on practical experience. The findings established that a remarkable number of respondents were of the opinion that practical exposure to various cases and scenarios invariably results in building confidence in own abilities. About half the number of respondents indicated that they are provided with opportunities to use acquired skills and knowledge in real-life situations in communities. It was interesting that only a few respondents stated that theory alone does not equip them for the future, while others viewed practical exposure in communities as preparation for the future. A less significant number of respondents felt equipped to enter the profession as a result of SL while a few more felt that as a result of exposure to SL in the OT field they acquired knowledge, skills and experience to solve problems in the “real world”. These were some of the more significant themes recorded in this category.

4.4.1.4 Themes related to community benefits

One of the key characteristics of SL is that the service should benefit the community and not exploit them. Judging from the vast number of responses in this category, the following significant themes emerged with regard to community benefits, most of which relate to those addressing community needs by providing services to (poor) communities.

The following are some of the more general themes that emerged from respondents:

- The community benefits from the services of the students who assist with workloads in hospitals and day hospitals.
- Groups and individuals are provided with therapy which aims to help people towards independence.
- Many state institutions, schools, old age homes and community organisations rely on their “free” services.
- We help people to maximise their potential by training them to develop skills to become functional and independent, thus reducing disabilities in the communities.
- Because (poor) people in communities have no access to secondary health care due to lack of resources and funds, we introduce and implement rehabilitation/ development/ preventative health care programmes in communities.
- We aim to make community projects sustainable by setting up structures in the communities and training people as assistants to continue the programmes.

While the majority of individual responses related to the above, a significant comment from one respondent was that occupational therapists at outside institutions remain in touch with new approaches and tests made available by the university through its students.

4.4.1.5 Themes related to institutional benefits

Because SL is about building reciprocal relationships between all parties involved, it has become important that the institution also benefit from the interaction with communities. Themes that were identified indicated that a remarkable number of respondents believed that the university definitely benefited from their involvement in communities. The following examples from the data reflect the most significant reasons or themes indicated by respondents:

- The OT department marketed itself within communities through free service delivery.
- The university gains recognition by the quality of work done by the students.
- The university earns status and prestige in communities through their involvement in various communities.
- The OT staff is provided with opportunities to assess the effectiveness of the courses.
- The institution is provided the opportunities for research and adding to the body of knowledge.
- The university is promoting the profession through good services in communities.
- The institution is helping to relieve the workload of permanent staff in communities.

While the majority of responses in this category related to the above responses, interestingly, only one respondent did not provide any response to this question.

4.4.1.6 Themes related to assessment of service-learning

One of the key elements of SL is that it should form an integral part of the curriculum and that it should be credit bearing. Credit for academic courses is given to students for demonstrating their academic learning. In this category all responses were fairly similar and respondents gave the impression that they know what is expected from them in terms of assessment. Although most respondents were uncertain about the number of credits allocated for their service component, some of them suggested 8 credits. However, they were all very clear that 50% of

the course marks are allocated for practical skills and knowledge acquired during service-learning activities.

A number of examples of responses cited include:

- Formal evaluations took place twice a year and at the end of every practical block.
- Daily and weekly reports are written on every case that is treated.
- Peer assessment and self-evaluations take place within specific sessions in the presence of a lecturer.
- Once a week a practical demonstration or case studies are presented by every student; this is then discussed, evaluated and recommendations are made.
- Assessments are done and discussed by the resident supervisors during service activities.

Although most students have been in agreement that assessment methods are efficient, a number of them indicated in the category 'suggestions for improvement' (see 4.4.1.9), that more time should be allowed for meaningful reflection on service experiences.

4.4.1.7 Themes related to constraints experienced during service-learning

There were three very distinct themes that emerged in this category. These included negative attitudes of supervisors, high expectations of lecturers and travelling and financial implications. I will discuss each of them separately and highlight some of the examples as indicated.

(i) Negative attitude of supervisors

Lack of collaboration between respondents and supervisors led to feelings of discouragement. This was illustrated by the following comments:

- a lack of trust and good relationship between students and supervisor OT;
- unwillingness of some supervisors to explain practical problems led to communication problems and insufficient support;
- limitations set by hospital therapists;

- lack of knowledge when to consult with supervisors;
- limited awareness of what one is able to do within institutions;
- seeing treatment go wasted because of lack of continuity;
- authoritarian attitudes and leadership styles of doctors and nursing staff;
- clashes within the multidisciplinary team led to ineffective treatment; and
- expectations of lecturers differ from those of supervisor OT's.

(ii) *High expectations of lecturers*

Indications of the second theme related to high expectations of lecturers were:

- lecturers are biased towards students;
- stress as a result of high expectations and subjectivity of lecturers;
- lack of exposure to various cases due to logistics;
- course too "mark-oriented" so that clients' interests are not 100% presented;
- limited funds for resources, supplies for activities, etc.; and
- some students are placed in areas where there is no full-time OT, and expected to run the whole area by themselves.

(iii) *Financial implications of SL*

The third theme referred to financial implications of service-learning activities. Most students were unhappy about having to provide their own transport to service centres and the lack of financial assistance from the university to cover their transport costs. This becomes a great financial burden when they are busy for blocks of 6 to 7 weeks at a time. Some of the comments included the following:

- long distances to travel – centres are often very far from campus;
- travelling is time-consuming and often caused lateness;
- public transport is very costly;
- having to drive to unsafe areas alone; and
- working in areas where no public transport is available.

It was claimed that constraints were often caused by external factors, which may also impact on the successful delivery of SL. This accounts for the inclusion of external factors as a category to determine what those factors are that influenced the students' service experiences.

4.4.1.8 Themes related to external factors

Respondents indicated a strong sense of conflict between the understanding that they have to go out into communities to perform service-learning activities, and feelings of unhappiness about having to take sole responsibility for getting to service-learning placement centres. Again some of these themes overlapped with the comments made in the previous category (4.4.1.7).

The following comments illustrate the respondents' unhappiness with the situation:

- unsafe areas, where unemployment is high and gangs hang loiter idly;
- robbed of cell phones in unsafe areas, where it is essential to remain in touch with lecturers;
- unsafe areas prevent us from doing home visits;
- lack of funds and resources for treatment programmes;
- patients who do not complete their treatment programme; and
- strikes at schools and institutions interfere with the execution of the programme.

Another theme that emerged was the lack of transport as mentioned in the previous category and the financial implications attached to long practical periods of six weeks.

It was also interesting to note that only two students had no comments to offer in this category. This could be due to either not taking time to think about those external factors or that they were placed at very convenient centres where they were not affected by any external factors such as those indicated above by other respondents.

4.4.1.9 Themes related to suggestions for improvement of SL practice

Having participated in service-learning activities and having had the opportunity to reflect on their practice, the constraints experienced by respondents and external factors that influenced successful delivery of SL activities, I thought it should be useful to determine if respondents had any suggestions to offer for improving future implementation of service-learning activities.

Three distinct themes emerged from the suggestions offered by respondents. These themes focused on university support, improved working relationships with supervisors and an improved evaluation system.

(i) Institutional support

Suggestions offered in terms of the first theme include:

- The university should provide more explicit support by providing a bus to drop off and collect students in unsafe areas; and
- the university should provide students with financial support before the start of practical blocks.

(ii) Improved working relationships with supervisors

In terms of the theme related to improved working relationships (which also emerged in previous categories), some of the recommendations offered include :

- more feedback from supervisor OT's in terms of treatment strategies at service-learning sites;
- too much conflicting feedback from supervisor OT's; and
- more demonstrations of skills by experienced OT's in the field ... in some areas OT's only work behind the desk.

(iii) Improved evaluation system

In terms of the evaluation theme, some of the suggestions offered include:

- standardized feedback from lecturers within the department;
- allow more time for meaningful reflection on SL experiences;
- shorten practical periods to 5 weeks with much more exposure to a variety of OT SL activities during the third and fourth year; and

- more objective evaluations and more involvement of student opinions in evaluations.

Although only two respondents did not offer any comments in terms of external factors, it was interesting to note that only a few respondents did not have any suggestions or recommendations to offer for improving future SL practice.

Due to the diversity and uniqueness of their SL activities, I thought it should be enlightening to know whether they could distinguish between some of their most significant or meaningful experiences during their SL term.

4.4.1.10 Themes related to significant or meaningful experiences

In this category all respondents, except one, responded extensively to this question. It was clear from their responses that they attached a great deal of value to their SL activities and that they found their experiences very rewarding. A number of students indicated that there were too many meaningful incidents to mention. However, two major themes emerged from the list of comments made by respondents. The first theme focused on making a difference in the lives of others while the second theme looked at personal growth.

An overwhelming number of respondents indicated that they could see the positive effects and the difference that they made to people's lives by the following comments:

- seeing the positive effect while watching people change and grow;
- good relationships with clients make it all worthwhile;
- to see children with learning disabilities reach their potential, to watch them slowly start believing in their own potential, is very rewarding;
- contributing to the development of impoverished communities by delivering quality service to them;
- knowing that you use scientifically sound methods to enhance the quality of people's lives;
- teaching patients skills to become independent so that they can generate an income;

- witnessing the excitement of patients once they realise they are making progress towards independence; and
- working with people, helping them and contributing to their well being.

Comments in terms of the second theme relate more to their own personal growth and value, and are evident in some of the following comments:

- an instructor who focused more on the positive than the negative, really boosted my self-esteem; she helped me to build on my strengths and always praised the positive before evaluating the negative aspects;
- realising how much I can do, how much I have changed and grown;
- it was a privilege to be exposed to the practical field of OT;
- SL helped me to assess that I made the right career choice;
- to appreciate the diversity of seven different fields of OT; and
- I valued the support of peers.

It was necessary to verify the identified emerging themes and their contextualisation with a second opinion. For this purpose a peer check was done with a colleague. A copy of the categories and the related themes was given to a colleague who is a qualified researcher to verify the themes.

The second-level analysis of the questionnaire data, as has been discussed above, will now be followed by the presentation of interview findings.

4.5. PRESENTATION OF INTERVIEW FINDINGS

Among the respondents selected for the interviews was the head of the OT department because of her leadership role. The other interview respondents included the supervisor OT of a particular community project (VOLCANO), the chairperson of the project who is also one of the school managers, and four volunteers who work in the community project. The first interview was conducted with the head of the OT department to gain an overall understanding of how their SL programmes were conceptualised, planned, implemented and evaluated. It was only after this interview that the questionnaires were sent out to the students. Thereafter the interviews with the other respondents were conducted.

All interviews were conducted in Afrikaans because of language preference, and responses were translated. All translations were done directly in an attempt to capture the undertones and innuendos of all responses.

4.5.1 Level one analysis of interviews

The analysis of data at this level was done as per individual interview. The transcriptions of all the interviews were carefully read through and checked against the original tape recordings and memo notes. Because the focus of the interview with the head of the OT department was different from the focus with the other interviewees, that data will be reported separately. The other interviews will be combined as one group and the data analysed collectively as the focus there has been on the community project.

4.5.1.1 First interview with the head of the OT department (HOD)

The transcription of the interview with the head of the department was carefully perused a second time to identify topics or categories that were mentioned. The categories that emerged from this interview were:

- the aims of service-learning,
- the different SL programmes and focus areas,
- assessment of SL,
- a community project (Volcano Project),
- departmental support to students and challenges and constraints.

The five categories were colour coded in the transcription, to facilitate identification of further stages of the analysis. All those responses that did not fit into any of these categories were marked. In some cases responses could be categorised into more than one of these categories. As all categories were colour coded, this prevented premature exclusion of data.

Afterwards open coding was done and themes/ topics that appear in the responses regarding a specific category were noted in the transcript. The themes were then compared to the questionnaire themes, and the broad trends were listed. The themes that emerged are in no way a comprehensive record of all that

was said during the interview. They merely represent the most frequent remarks that were mentioned and the exact meanings will become clear in terms of the examples which are quoted from the data during the second level analysis.

4.5.2 Classification of themes that emerged from the interview data

Level two coding was done to further reduce and contextualise the data. The classification of the themes during this stage will now be discussed and illustrated with examples from the data. The order of the discussion follows that of the initial five broad categories, namely aims of SL, different SL programmes and focus areas, assessment, the Volcano Project, challenges and constraints.

4.5.2.1 Themes related to aims of service-learning

The interview question sought to determine how the OT department viewed the aims of its SL practices. The responses below are an indication of the departmental views. According to the head of the OT department the aims of SL include:

- exposing students to various clinical fields;
- developing practical skills and experience in the OT field;
- learning to develop and manage programmes independently;
- providing a service to the broader community;
- to make community projects sustainable; and
- to create job opportunities – services should eventually lead to the creation of a full-time OT post.

Because no reference was made to creating civic awareness or developing a sense of social responsibility during the interview, the specific question was asked whether the department viewed the development of civic responsibility and nation building as a central goal. The response was that this was not an explicit goal of the course.

4.5.2.2 Themes related to different SL programmes and focus areas

The question asked about the different SL programmes and focus areas indicated that the OT department offers different services in different areas where there is a need. The types of programmes and services that they focus on include:

- various Protective Workshops with disabled people in a number of areas;
- service organisations such as the Alta Du Toit Aftercare Centre – here the staff and students developed the Workshop Centre and also present an intervention programme aimed at the lower functioning persons to develop their skills to an extent that they can join the Workshop Centre;
- old age homes on a session basis – even here the services are aimed at the appointment of a full-time OT in order to make programmes sustainable;
- day hospital rehabilitation centres;
- hospitals, although service delivery and inputs from staff and students in hospitals are not acknowledged because service has never been quantified in terms of time and money; and
- schools, where students help to identify learning problems and disabilities and design intervention programmes to address the problem areas.

It is evident that the OT department offers a wide variety of SL programmes in different areas. They concentrate on the lower-socio economic areas where the need is greatest or in areas where no OT services are available.

4.5.2.3 Themes related to assessment of SL

Because service-learning forms an integral part of the curriculum, assessment entails a very important component of SL. According to the interview response all final year students are expected to complete 26 weeks of practical service in community centres and by the end of the fourth year each student should have completed 1200 hours of service learning in the community. The OT department consists of nine full-time lecturers, and each lecturer adopts a specific geographic area. Each lecturer is responsible for the activities or projects in that particular area and supervises the students who work in that area.

Students are generally exposed to a variety of experiences in different institutions and different clinical settings. After their practical demonstrations, opportunities for self-assessment and peer assessments are provided. Students are supported through reflection, discussions and feedback. Each student is evaluated once per week when they do a practical demonstration or presentation of their case studies. Individual lecturers assess these practical activities on a continuous basis. In the lecture room they reflect on service learning experiences, discuss cases and look at the best possible solutions to address problems.

4.5.2.4 Themes related to the students' role in the Volcano Project

In response to the inquiry about any significantly successful community programmes and how the OT students contributed to its success, the Volcano Project was mentioned. The Volcano Project was identified as a SL community project that was initiated by the OT department in 1995. It started out as an after-school programme in an underprivileged community to help children with learning barriers. Because the need was so great in the area, the programme was slowly incorporated into the school programme and more people were needed to cope with the large groups of learners. It was decided to extend an invitation to unemployed parents and community members who were interested in working with children, to become involved in the programme as volunteers. Initially only three schools were involved in the programme but it gradually extended until all six primary schools in the area formed part of the programme. The OT department was instrumental in getting a full-time occupational therapist appointed.

The OT students play a crucial role in this project since they train and supervise the volunteers who present the remedial intervention programmes. They also present the volunteers with personal empowerment aspects such as communication skills, conflict management, HIV/ AIDS, etc. The students learn to design and manage programmes independently, while they are supporting the volunteers. New aspects such as designing a vision and mission statement for their community projects, budgeting and fundraising have also been added to their responsibilities. Each student has to organise a fundraising campaign in order to raise funds for the payment of volunteers. At the same time they would be developing a sustainable project.

4.5.2.5 Themes related to constraints and challenges faced by students

It became clear that internal and external factors impacted on the successful delivery of SL activities. Some of the internal factors included community supervisors at different service centres who are often not open to inputs from students. Consequently students were limited in the execution of their tasks. Emotional stress appeared to be a further factor which affected some students who struggle to work under poor conditions.

External factors mentioned referred to unsafe areas where students have to work, the use of public transport, time-consuming travelling and the high cost of transport to service areas.

This concludes the analysis of the interview data with the head of OT department.

4.5.3 Classification of themes that emerged from interviews with community stakeholders

The interviews with the supervisor OT, the community volunteers and the management committee chairperson indicated a number of common themes. This was because in all interviews the focus was the community project (VOLCANO), which was initiated by the OT students and their area lecturer. For this reason I have chosen to discuss the data as one group and the main themes that emanated from the data were:

- initiation and development of the community project;
- aims of the project;
- role of the OT students;
- role of the supervisor OT;
- the role of the community volunteers;
- the role of the management committee,
- community benefits and institutional benefits; and
- challenges and constraints experienced.

The diagram below reflects a summary of the common themes that emerged from the interview transcripts.

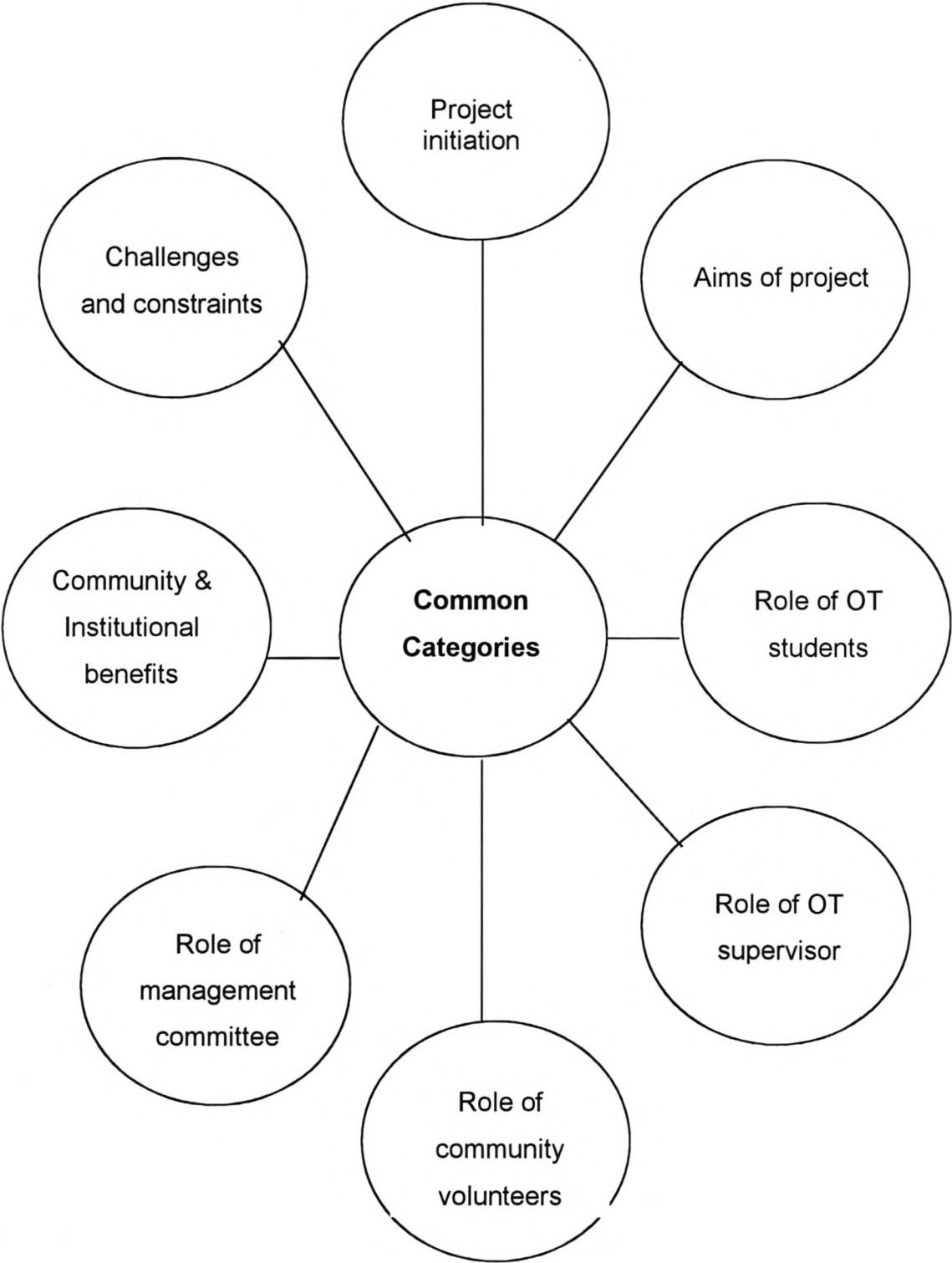


Figure 5: Summary of common interview themes

4.5.3.1 Category related to initiation and development of the community project

In response to the question regarding the role of the institution (the OT department) in initiating this particular community project (Volcano), all respondents indicated similar responses. The following comments reflect their responses:

After the 1994 census survey the need for stimulation programmes for pre-school children was expressed by social workers in the Ravensmead area. At this stage there were no pre-primary classes in this area and it became clear that a school readiness programme was needed to help learners prepare for school. The OT department of the University of Stellenbosch was approached to assist with an intervention programme for learners with developmental disabilities and challenges.

The OT department started a school-readiness stimulation programme with three schools in the area. With the utilisation of their final year students, they started training parents and unemployed community volunteers to assist with the presentation of the programme. Later the programme was expanded and the department motivated for the appointment of a full-time OT who could support the schools in the area. A year ago a full-time occupational therapist was appointed to drive the project. Initially she started out with three schools but at this stage there are six schools involved in the project.

4.5.3.2 Category related to the aims of the community project

The interview findings indicated that the aims of the project were twofold:

Firstly, to provide a service to the community through the development of learners in the foundation phase that experience learning problems, under-stimulation and attention deficit disorders. Secondly, to create job opportunities by training community volunteers who are mainly unemployed school leavers, and who wish to become involved in the community and work with children. They make themselves available to work in the schools for a period of one year. The management committee is currently trying to arrange that the training programme serves as recognition of prior learning (RPL) criteria for acceptance at a Technical

College that offers pre-primary or Educare programmes so that the volunteers may gain access to further education and training.

4.5.3.3 Category related to the role of the OT students

Common findings that emanated from all the responses indicated that the role of the OT students is to supervise and guide the volunteer workers during the intervention sessions to ensure that correct treatment is implemented. The students are furthermore responsible for presenting enrichment or empowerment programmes to the volunteers. The enrichment programmes focus on issues such as conflict management, stress management, HIV/AIDS and child abuse detection programmes. Finally each OT student has to initiate and manage a fundraising project and develop a budget for the project as part of her SL experience. These efforts serve to help with the financing of the project and make the project sustainable.

4.5.3.4 Category related to the role of the community volunteers

Common themes that emerged from the interview data relate to the fact that the eleven volunteer workers work very closely with the OT supervisor and the OT students. They are trained as OT assistants who are responsible for presenting the intervention programmes to learners with learning problems. The OT supervisor takes them through the introductory training programme and prepares the weekly lessons. Thereafter the OT students supervise and support them in their tasks.

The volunteers work from Mondays to Thursdays from 9h00 to 13h00. During this time each volunteer works with 6 learners per session and meets each learner twice a week. The volunteers are divided among the six schools with two volunteers serving a school. In this way they see about 250 learners per week. Additional training and enrichment programmes are done in the afternoons after 13h00. On Thursday afternoons they generally meet with the OT students to work out the lessons and train for the following week's programme.

The question “why did you become involved in this community project”, for example, was posed to different volunteers and the following remarks reflect some of their responses:

- I attended a meeting in the community hall where the schools had a parent meeting and explained the idea of the voluntary workers. I have always wanted to work with children and saw this as an opportunity to become involved in my community.
- I see this as a step ahead ... I can go for further training in pre-school training at a college. I find it a pleasure working with pre-school and grades 1 and 2 children.
- I am hoping to find a job at the aftercare centre or a crèche after this year.
- We learn so much ... I have learned a lot during the training. I never knew anything about HIV/AIDS, but now I can look for symptoms when I work with the children. The enrichment programmes have also helped us in our lives at home ... the students teach us all kinds of skills. These skills we can use at home in our own communities ... with raising our own children.
- I never knew about conflict management, now I have come to learn how to handle conflict. I can help the learners in the school who have behaviour problems, I use it at home with my own family. Yes, it has really been of great value to me.

Clearly, the findings suggest that the volunteer workers had different reasons for becoming involved in the project but they all had a common love of working with children. They all aspire to continue working with pre-primary learners and some have indicated that they wish to complete a formal qualification in this field. They have all found it valuable to work with the OT students and seemed to have developed very good relationships with the students.

4.5.3.5 Category related to the role of the OT supervisor

The interview data findings decidedly indicate that the OT supervisor plays a central role in the Volcano community project and therefore serves on the management committee. Her role is to co-ordinate and monitor the project at the different schools and as a result works very closely with the final year OT students

and their lecturer. It is also her responsibility to ensure that the project remains sustainable and therefore liaises closely with all other community stakeholders.

She does the initial training of the volunteer workers before they are handed over to the OT students. She also supervises the OT students who continue to train and support the volunteer workers in their weekly programme. The supervisor OT's primary role is to assess the learners who experience learning challenges or who are not showing any progress. Thereafter she designs the stimulation programmes for every individual learner and in addition provides guidance and resources to the educators and makes the necessary referrals to the school clinic where necessary. Because the needs are so great in the area, the volunteer workers have to work with groups of learners per session while the OT supervisor oversees the entire process.

4.5.3.6 Category related to the role of the management committee

According to the interview results three major themes emerged in this category, namely, the role of the committee, their vision and the success rate of the project.

(i) The role of the management committee

The role of the management committee is to manage and co-ordinate the project, to raise funds for sustaining the project and to liaise with all stakeholders involved in the project or those who can provide the needed support. All members on the committee are involved in the service-learning project because they believe it will produce important positive educational results for their learners, the schools and the community as a whole.

Each committee member has a specific role, for example, the deputy head at the school is the link between the teachers and the supervisor OT. The teachers assess the learners, identify the learning barriers and refer them to the deputy head who, in turn, refers them to the OT for formal assessment. She makes recommendations for further treatment and the OT students and the volunteer workers will treat those who can be helped at school. Those learners with more serious problems are referred to the school psychologist at the school clinic. This process of assessment within the school system eases the task of the school clinic

because the school psychologist will know precisely on what to focus by the time the learner gets to him or her.

(ii) The vision of the management committee

The vision of the management committee is to assist in the development and reconstruction of the local community. This is achieved by supporting the learners in the six primary schools within the community. Furthermore they aim to create jobs for their volunteer workers by paying them a small fee for their services and in one case a local church has offered to pay for the services of one of the volunteers since the school could not afford to do so.

(iii) The success of the project

The third theme relates to the evidence of success. According to the interview respondent the project has grown phenomenally since the appointment of the full-time OT who drives the project with enthusiasm and determination. Most learners progress so well during the intervention programmes that after three months most of them are returned to mainstream education. Although there are a number of learners who have to stay for longer periods, they do, however, show some positive progress.

A further success that was indicated was the creation of three full-time pre-primary posts at the schools and previous volunteer workers run these. They have also created an after-care programme from 13h00 to 18h00 and a former volunteer worker also runs this programme. In this way the management committee is supporting the volunteers to enter the permanent job market.

4.5.3.7 Category related to community and institutional benefits

The interview results yielded the following main community and institutional benefits that emanated as a result of the SL programme.

(i) Community benefits

The community clearly has benefited by the free service delivery of the OT students. Although the project initially started out as a stimulation programme for pre-school learners, it expanded greatly to include all learners in the schools which

covers a wide variety of educational aspects. The OT students share their knowledge, skills and competencies in the community through their fundraising projects as well as training and empowering the community volunteers to develop the required skills and knowledge to continue the programme on their own.

One of the aims of the institution is to promote job creation within all their SL projects. Every lecturer thus has to ensure that a full-time OT is appointed in the project by the end of the training programme as happened in the case of this particular project. In this way the University shows its commitment to the community by using its human resources to help build and develop structures within the community.

The project has expanded to include other stakeholders such as The Tygerberg College, represented by the principal and his students in the Sports Administration department. They have offered their services to the community by becoming involved in a gross motor development programme at the primary schools in the area. Matric students and other unemployed youth are utilized as volunteers to present the programmes after school. The Sports Administration department has offered to train committed volunteers as sports administrators after completion of voluntary service for a period of one year.

(ii) Institutional benefits

The OT students have been provided with opportunities to develop their knowledge and skills in a community context. They received hands-on experience by working with the learners in underprivileged communities. This exposure had broadened their understanding of community contexts and developed their skills repertoire. The OT students also gained experience in writing constitutions, initiating and managing fundraising projects.

The OT department was provided with opportunities to assess the relevance and effectiveness of its course content and adding to the body of knowledge. Clearly, there has been a mutual learning and sharing of information between community and institution. In the past financial knowledge was not part of the OT curriculum. However, the department has come to realise the relevance of it and it has

become an important component of the course since students need to know how to work out budgets and access funding for their projects.

The University as in its entirety had gained recognition in the community and could market itself through SL projects and the quality service delivered by the OT students.

4.5.3.8 Category related to challenges and constraints

The interview findings indicated that limited financial resources are a major constraint that threatens the success of the project. All parties involved in the project reported enthusiasm and motivation as the greatest strengths of the project, however, finances are constantly needed to sustain the project and address the needs of the schools. Currently the volunteers are paid from school funds and the full-time OT is paid by one school only.

Fundraising is therefore a major challenge since the private sector has not been very supportive in financing their needs and the Western Cape Education Department does not have the financial resources to fund the employment of full-time OT's in the schools. Consequently the management committee has to take responsibility for fundraising to ensure that the project is run effectively.

The above discussion concludes the second level of the interview data analysis and this study proceeds to the analysis of the categories, themes and conclusions which will be verified.

4.6 ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE RESULTS

The questionnaire findings were interpreted against theoretical background of SL and how they relate to the research question i.e. how is SL conceptualised, planned and implemented within the OT department and how it relates to the key elements, goals, principles and value of SL in general.

To verify the questionnaire and interview findings it was not sufficient to merely identify the categories and themes. It was vital to establish which general themes and patterns emerged across the questionnaires and interviews and check how

they relate to the research question. It was also necessary to establish supportive evidence in each of the ten questionnaire categories to determine whether the themes, patterns or trends that emerged are related to the research question. In some cases I linked the categories where they overlapped or are closely related.

4.6.1 Category 1: The purpose of SL

The significant themes that related to integration and application of theory, practical experience, developing skills, competence and knowledge, providing service to underprivileged communities and learning to handle real-life situations, provide supportive evidence that the purpose of SL as it is conceptualised by the students, are related to the key elements and goals of service-learning as indicated in the literature review.

During the interview with the head of the OT department, it became clear that the lecturers did not consciously aim to develop an explicit awareness of civic mindedness and nation building. However, based on the responses from the respondents I think it still happened unconsciously to some degree. It is clear that many respondents see their participation in SL activities as responding to societal needs to deliver quality service to underprivileged communities and to create partnerships between the institution and civil society. Many students believed that they addressed social problems in an informed, committed and positive manner. This helped them to understand community contexts and related community institutions better and to appreciate the value of quality service to the community. It appears therefore that respondents have not only developed knowledge and skills during SL activities, but that their attitudes and values have also been changed as a result of their SL experiences.

4.6.2 Categories 2 and 3: Mastery of content and development of skills

Supportive evidence from the questionnaire data indicated that the SL activities were not merely about the addition of service to learning, but that it was really about the integration of service with learning. Students' community service experiences were integrated with the academic learning objectives of the course. Students believed that their service-learning experiences informed and transformed their academic learning while the theory also informed and

transformed their practice and development of skills and competencies. As opposed to contrived textbook scenarios and case studies, students were exposed to complex problems, engaging them in real-life contexts, and introducing them to diverse fields of clinical treatment programmes. These findings were substantiated by similar comments expressed by the head of the OT department.

The findings link very closely with the principles of SL, which states that participation in SL should form an integral part of the curriculum. Since SL emphasises learning by doing, most students indicated that they had developed knowledge, skills and understanding through a process of experiential learning that forced them to reflect on their actions in the “real world”. The occupational therapy curriculum is community-based and problem-oriented, giving the OT students the opportunities to develop the skills to work with diverse disabilities and contribute to the needs of the people in the communities.

4.6.3 Categories 4 and 5: Community and institutional benefits

One of the essential concepts of SL is reciprocity between the server and those being served, in this case, between the institution and the community. In SL the community should control the service provided. The needs of the community, as determined by its members, should define what the service tasks would be. The community impact findings offer a very positive picture of the value of SL programmes in communities. The data indicated that the OT department was largely successful in implementing their SL programme if one considers the stated benefits to the community. The community identified its own needs and approached the institution for assistance with stimulation problems for their pre-school learners. The findings indicated that the OT students were not placed in community settings merely to achieve desired student learning outcomes. Instead the students provided a service that addressed the actual needs of the community. So the SL arrangements were genuinely reciprocal and the community’s needs were not sacrificed to academic objectives.

The community project members also learned to take responsibility for their own needs and empowered themselves to develop mechanisms and relationships to address their needs. These findings were verified by the various interview respondents and provide sufficient supportive evidence that the community does indeed benefit from the SL activities of the OT students.

On the other hand, the data findings indicated sufficient supportive evidence in the questionnaire data that the university benefits from an increased presence in the community. The students engaged in service learning are wittingly or unwittingly serving as ambassadors enhancing the University's public image. Through the SL activities of students the institution is contributing to the needs of society through the application of knowledge and skills. At the same time this exposure is also providing the institution with opportunities for research, assessment of course relevance and adding to their own knowledge base as indicated by the data. It is clear from the data findings that curricular integration of service-learning indicates that the institution/ department values service to the community as part of the educational experience as well as part of the university service mission.

4.6.4 Category 6: Assessment of service-learning

The number of credits or the mark allocation percentage that is accorded to the service-learning programme and the extent to which it is integrated into the curriculum can be gauged by the way the SL activities are assessed. The OT department allocates 50% of final year coursework to the SL component. Students are well aware that they cannot complete their final year on their theoretical knowledge alone. They seem to have taken their community-based research projects (case studies and practical demonstrations) very seriously as these are evaluated on a weekly basis. It appears further from the data that the assessment criteria for SL activities were closely related to the curriculum goals. However, the data indicated that more students would like to be more involved with or consulted in the development and design of assessment criteria. It is also significant that a number of respondents requested that more time be structured for meaningful reflection on SL experiences. This could be an indication that respondents take SL experiences seriously and may feel that they could learn more by reflecting on those experiences.

4.6.5 Category 7 and 8: Constraints and external factors experienced

Effective management and supervision of students in SL projects seemed to have been a major constraint to students. Supportive evidence from the data indicated that this seems to be due to negative attitudes and mindsets of community supervisors and their related staff. The high cost of travelling to community projects at the students' own expense was verified during the interview with the head of the OT department. She reported that the direct cost to students are considerable because the university does not subsidise their travelling cost or provide transport to take students to various community projects. Some students have to travel long distances and these costs can become a constraint to effective service delivery.

Clearly, if the University seeks to hone its vision for supporting and developing communities through widespread use of SL, then it will seriously have to consider policies and procedures to make more funding available to faculties and departments to implement their SL projects more successfully. It is evident from the data findings that the OT department lack such institutional support.

The third constraint referred to the high expectations of lecturers. There seems to be the perception that lecturers have different standards and do not standardize their assessment criteria. Some students reported that this causes stress, and that lecturers are biased towards students. The reality is that lecturers will always have different focus areas that relate to their area of speciality and consequently will have different assessment standards. However, there is a need for lecturers to be more inclusive and consult more closely with students when designing their assessment criteria so that students will have a better understanding of what is expected of them.

The external factors discussed in the data findings were closely related and overlapped with the above constraints. The findings support the idea that if SL programmes are to be effectively implemented, then the institution will have to provide greater support to both the staff and students in order to overcome some of the external barriers and constraints as indicated in the data.

4.6.6 Category 9: Suggestions for improvements

It was interesting that relatively few respondents offered no suggestions or recommendations for improving future SL practice. This could be due to the fact that they have either not given it enough thought or may believe that the contents of the SL programme, how much they have learned from it and to what extent they could apply their knowledge and skills, was adequate.

The data findings in this category suggest that greater effort should be made to establish and support links between the OT department and community supervisors in the various community projects. There seems to be a need to reach a common understanding of their respective roles and their expectations in supporting students during their SL performance. This recommendation becomes important since it is clear that community staff support is essential to the long-term success and stability of SL programmes.

Furthermore, it has been suggested in earlier categories that greater institutional support is needed in terms of financing SL costs. The OT department head has verified this recommendation and has been fighting for years to get greater institutional support in terms of transportation of OT students to the various SL centres.

4.6.7 Category 10: Significant experiences

Most encouraging is that all respondents offered to share at least one or more significant or meaningful incident that they experienced during their SL programme. The positive picture sketched by students is closely linked to one of the broader goals of SL, that is, developing social responsibility and nation building. Most students indicated that they found it rewarding to “see the difference they made in people’s lives, to watch people grow and change, to see people start believing in their own potential, to develop skills that would help people become functional and independent”. Although the development of civic responsibility or nation building was never an explicit aim of the OT department, it is clear that the students were empowered to strengthen communities through meaningful service.

4.7 CONCLUSION OF QUESTIONNAIRE FINDINGS

The conclusions constructed from the findings suggest that the students had entered into a broader educational reality, in which vocational skills and knowledge, critical reflection and analysis, community development, care and compassion were instilled and developed over a period of time as they executed their SL tasks. They also learned to analyse their institutional reality in a more critical manner than before, especially in terms of suggestions or recommendations for improved future SL practice.

The questionnaire data findings support the importance of SL programmes where community service programmes form an integral part of curriculum goals. These findings point to the role of the institution in developing academic excellence and vocational skills, as well as growing more socially responsive to the needs of the society.

It is interesting that most of the challenges and constraints faced by most, if not all students, are very similar to those constraints and challenges faced by other SL practitioners and students in the country. However, the findings underscore the need for a more effective system for the planning, implementation, monitoring and assessment of SL programmes within this institution. The OT staff needs to continue working on persistent problems of scheduling, assessment, transportation and communications between the various community parties involved in the SL partnership, as these may be the factors which could limit effective student contributions and frustrate community programme supervisors.

4.8 ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF INTERVIEW FINDINGS WITH THE HEAD OF THE OT DEPARTMENT

Triangulation was used to compare the categories and themes that emerged from the interview with the head of the department (HOD), to the questionnaire categories and responses. This was done to check the validity of findings and to look for confirmation or contradiction of any of the themes. In terms of the aims of SL as expressed by the HOD, there seems to be a very strong correlation between the responses indicated by her and those reported by the respondents in the questionnaire categories. One of the aims, which the OT department considers to

be quite important, is to create job opportunities in the community. Allocating each lecturer in the OT department to a specific geographic area aligns these professed goals and practice. This suggests a high level of involvement of all academic staff in the SL programmes. The community OT as well as the management committee chairperson have verified this since a number of permanent jobs have been created within the Volcano Project.

Furthermore, it is interesting to note that although the OT lecturers never instilled the development of civic responsibility and nation building as a central goal of the course, it somehow happened at an unconscious level. Students indicated an increase in the degree to which they became aware of community needs, believed they could make a difference and were committed to service currently as well as in the future. Judging from the questionnaire responses, exposing students to various underprivileged community settings to deliver service, did to some degree, serve to deepen their sense of connectedness and responsibility to the communities that they served.

The only significant difference between the responses of the HOD and the students was in terms of the assessment of SL activities. Although the students indicated that they are all aware of the pass requirements and the percentage allocation for SL activities, they did not necessarily understand or agree with the assessment procedures. The head of the OT department was, however, able to explain the overall assessment goals and strategies for the course with much more clarity. This could be due to the fact that she has an overall understanding of the outcomes, strategies and assessment criteria for the entire OT course.

There was no significant difference between the questionnaire and interview respondents in terms of the role of the students in the Volcano Project or the constraints and challenges faced by the OT students during the performance of their SL tasks. As reported in 4.5.5 the questionnaire respondents and the HOD reported the same findings in terms of the challenges and constraints that were experienced.

4.9 CONCLUSIONS OF THE HOD INTERVIEW FINDINGS

The findings suggest that the OT department takes its SL component very seriously in terms of the extent to which community service is regarded as part of curriculum goals and the manner in which the relationship between service and learning is assessed. Although the OT department attempts to develop a socially responsive orientation to its teaching programme, it may be essential that it establishes civic awareness and social responsibility as a central goal of its SL programmes. Failing this, students might view SL activities merely as a practical component of their coursework and never really develop insight into the broader socio-economic circumstances and the needs of the local communities. In order to make the OT curriculum genuinely transformative, its aims should be in line with the principles of SL as set out in the literature review.

However, it is clear that the OT department is attempting to orientate its goals to align themselves more closely to the goals of SL. Evidence of this could be seen in the fact that they are acting as genuine partners by gleaning from community knowledge. Mode 2 knowledge production, with its focus on problem-solving in the community, has become an important means to assess the OT course content and to include elements that would make it more socially relevant in its application.

A significant obstacle the OT department faces is that although it operates in a wide variety of community settings it is unable to quantify its contribution to community service programmes in terms of time and money. This makes it difficult for them to access financial resources from the institution and this in turn impacts on the successful SL delivery by their students. However, if the University from the outset incorporated service as an integral component of its mission statement, then it has an obligation to support its faculties and departments to educate and empower their students to strengthen local communities through service. This suggests that service should not be seen as a separate function from teaching and research but should be integral to all activities.

4.10 ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF COMMUNITY INTERVIEW FINDINGS

The interview findings were interpreted in terms of the stated research question and against the theoretical background of service-learning. In line with the key

elements, goals and principles of SL, all respondents verified that the Volcano community project is a partnership that was initiated by the community. The local community identified its own needs and then approached the OT department to assist them and together they developed the aims for the project. The research findings illustrate that the institution and the management committee share the same goals of providing service to the broader community and the alleviation of poverty through job creation opportunities. The OT department provided the community with institutional resources by means of its staff and student expertise to train the volunteers in intervention programmes, through networking and supporting devices to sustain the project.

The findings also indicate that this SL project (Volcano) significantly impacted on relationships between all stakeholders involved in the project. In terms of capacity building a sense of interdependence and mutual responsibility had developed between the OT students and the community volunteers. The students benefited by the development of skills and confidence while the community volunteers were trained as OT assistants. Both parties reported a keen appreciation for the opportunities for personal growth, the building of self-esteem and affirmation in relation to their service learning work. It is also exciting that community volunteers felt empowered enough to take their newly acquired skills into their personal lives and into the broader community outside of the school gates.

Furthermore, the appointment of a full-time occupational therapist in this community project was a direct result of a collaborative partnership agreement between the community and the institution. The OT department made it clear that they will only become involved in the project if it could be sustained on an ongoing basis. The management committee demonstrated their commitment to the project by taking responsibility for the sustainability of the project. Each school has to pay an honorarium to its volunteer workers per month and one school pays the OT's monthly salary.

The research findings, moreover, suggests that the institution, the students and the community derive considerable benefits from their SL experiences. The institution is given the opportunity to become more visible in the community

through the service delivered by its students. The institution can contribute to the needs of local communities through the application of knowledge and skills during SL tasks. Through the application of Mode 2 knowledge production in a particular social setting, the institution also gains access to community realities which provide further opportunities for research based on problem solving. In addition the OT department was also able to assess the relevance of its curriculum and could become responsive to the needs of the community and the students by adding meaningful aspects to the curriculum which were previously not included.

The OT students also benefited from their SL experiences through the development of relevant knowledge and skills in real-world settings. They were able to apply their theoretical knowledge, develop problem-solving skills, and build confidence during the delivery of SL tasks. Through their SL experiences the students became more aware of the social problems faced by society and many of them developed the belief that they have made a difference to the lives of people. Within community settings students were also exposed to networking opportunities which may enhance their future employment and career prospects.

The community respondents on their part claimed that SL in the Volcano project contributed to the development of their community. In their case the community social problems were analysed, solutions were identified and community action was promoted. The institution helped to build capacity in the community to address the needs and challenges faced by them through the use of “free” labour and expertise of the OT department. The SL programme helped to provide opportunities for job training, skills enhancement and access to formal learning opportunities for the volunteers. It also served to strengthen relationships and build trust among all stakeholders involved in the project.

With regard to evidence of success it is difficult to prove precisely how successful the Volcano project really is. Although no formal research evaluation was conducted to assess the sustained impact of the project since its inception, the management committee and the community volunteers claim that the project is highly successful. Consequently it is difficult to assess for negative evidence because all respondents shared very positive comments and enthusiasm for the

project. However, the challenges and constraints that were illustrated in the findings indicate that sustaining the project may pose a major threat. They are battling to pay for the services of the full-time OT and community volunteers due to a lack of financial support from the private sector. This could be a negative aspect since the future sustainability of the programme may be threatened.

4.11 GENERAL CONCLUSION

The aim of this qualitative investigation was to determine how SL was conceptualised, planned, implemented and assessed in the OT department in terms of the key elements, goals and principles of SL. The findings suggest that according to the key elements, goals and principles of SL, the OT department has been able to respond to the social needs of local communities. It is indisputable that the OT students could draw on their professional knowledge and skills to run educational programmes in the community, such as the Volcano Project, and in this way make a significant contribution to the empowerment of local communities through the application of theoretical knowledge towards skills development. The results furthermore suggested a spirit of reciprocity in that the institution and the OT students benefited as much from their participation in SL experiences and programmes as the community.

It must, however, be mentioned that the true value and purpose of SL is to provide students with a broader appreciation of socio-economic needs and challenges faced by society and to develop an enhanced sense of civic responsibility. The OT department could do more to inculcate the value of civic awareness and an understanding of responsible citizenship among its students by making this an explicit goal of their SL component of the course.

The Volcano Project is but one example of a successful SL programme. The data findings indicate that there is a need to establish more supportive links with community supervisors in other SL centres. There may be a common understanding of the value of SL and the institution should collaborate more closely and involve them in designing assessment criteria for SL activities. This becomes essential to the long-term success and stability of SL programmes.

4.12 SUMMARY

In this chapter the findings of the research study have been analysed and presented followed by a discussion of the findings. The student questionnaire findings were presented and analysed according to categories and themes. This was followed by an analysis of the interview with the head of the OT department and the findings were presented according to five categories. An analysis of the interview findings of the community stakeholders was reported and the findings were presented in eight main themes. Common themes across the questionnaires and interviews related to the role of the institution, the role of the OT students, the role of the community stakeholders, community and institutional benefits and the challenges and constraints faced by both the institution and the community.

The following chapter provides a synthesis, conclusions and recommendations of the study based on the analysed data.

CHAPTER 5

SYNTHESIS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 SYNTHESIS

The primary focus of this study was to critically assess to what extent service-learning has been conceptualised, planned, implemented and assessed in the Occupational Therapy Department of the University of Stellenbosch, vis-à-vis the key elements, goals, principles and values envisaged in the notion of service-learning. The purpose is to furthermore gain a clearer understanding of what the current practices of service-learning within this particular department entails and assess the impact of a service-learning programme within the institution, as well as on the students and the community they serve in this respect.

To recapitulate the key debates, elements and lessons emanating from the different chapters of this study, it is necessary to briefly consider the following components:

5.1.1 Service-learning in context

From the background and overview provided in **Chapter 1**, it becomes clear that higher education institutions in South Africa will have to restructure and reconceptualise their policies and practices in teaching, research and service in order to become more responsive to the development needs of society. Currently service-learning is generally treated as “add-on” programmes by higher education institutions because they may not necessarily be linked to academic curricula and as such lose credibility with academics. By operationalising their service goals, higher education institutions will have to utilise the contributions of their students to advance the purposes of reconstruction and development through service-learning programmes in the community. This chapter moreover sought to review the general challenges and implications of SL and the transformed role that higher education institutions could play in recognising the value of problem-solving skills and applied knowledge in addition to academic knowledge. By institutionalising SL

students will be afforded the opportunities to integrate their academic knowledge with service provision in communities, and this in turn, may lead to a deeper understanding of social and civic responsibility.

5.1.2 Service-learning and existing literature

Chapter 2 of this study highlights a number of important issues of service-learning in terms of the existing literature.

This study explores the wide diversity of definitions, interpretations and purposes of SL which still cause a great deal of confusion elsewhere as well as in South Africa. The literature has highlighted that community service is viewed from a philanthropic perspective while service-learning is based on a civic perspective. A civic approach is based on the key elements of SL i.e. reciprocity and collaboration, mainly because of the value mutual respect and interdependence of rights and responsibilities play in this regard.

A further consideration in this study has been the importance of the key elements of service-learning practice. The value in these key SL elements resides in the fact that it differentiates between SL and volunteerism and traditional practicals or internships. The first key element that is identified is that SL is a credit-bearing experience that should form part of the curriculum, followed by the key element which calls for reciprocity where there are mutual benefits and responsibilities for all partners concerned. The notion of reciprocity also includes acknowledging community knowledge and expertise. This would provide institutions with the challenge of integrating Mode 2 knowledge production in their curricula to ensure problem-orientated and socially accountable knowledge and skills. In this regard collaboration lays the groundwork for trust and community building that is inclusive and reciprocal. The elements of reflection, inclusiveness, reciprocity and collaboration are underscored in the need for strategic planning and practical implementation challenges in terms of SAQA policies.

The existing literature of how SL is conceptualised in the South African context is rather limited. This study emphasises the need for service-learning which is defined in terms of the broad diversity of purposes in implementing SL in South

African higher education institutions. It also seeks to address the possible barriers and constraints in SL implementation and established that these constraints that higher education institutions in the USA face are also experienced within the South African SL context. It further seeks to highlight the need for the inclusion of all stakeholders, i.e. the benefits for students, the institution and the community. Finally the study extrapolated lessons that South African higher education institutions could learn from the USA service-learning context in terms of existing literature.

5.1.3 Research design and methodology for this study

In **Chapter 3** the research strategy of this study was discussed. A qualitative case study was proposed as research strategy to examine a particular case to provide insight into how SL is conceptualised, planned, implemented and assessed within the Occupational Therapy Department of the University of Stellenbosch. This case was a good example to support the study in terms of its aim to understand the unit of analysis. The case sought to highlight the understanding of the current SL practices within one department. It may also be possible to make recommendations for the future institutionalisation of SL, i.e. the conceptualisation, planning, implementation and assessment of SL within the University of Stellenbosch.

The questionnaires used, have been based on students' SL experiences. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with the head of the OT department and various community partners within a particular community project. The results were then reported, analysed and discussed.

5.1.4 Case study findings and analysis

The analysis of the results in **Chapter 4** discusses three main areas. Firstly, the analysis of the questionnaire results, which have been discussed according to ten categories that emerged, the findings of which showed that service-learning activities in the OT field enhanced the students' understanding of academic knowledge and facilitated the development of vocational skills. The findings furthermore indicate that, although the development of civic awareness was never an explicit goal of the OT department, in general, the SL programmes had

influenced most students' level of social awareness and had contributed to some degree, to changing values and responsibility towards the needs of the communities that they served. This finding is further illustrated by a letter from one of the OT students after the completion of her SL tasks (see Appendix E).

Secondly, the analysis of the interview with the head of the OT department was discussed and the findings indicated a strong correlation between the questionnaire and the interview results. The results showed that service-learning forms an integrated part of the OT curriculum and that the quality of student learning in service is in fact assessed and credited. However, the findings also indicated that the department experienced constraints in terms of financial support from the University and this impacted on the successful SL delivery by its students.

Thirdly, the analysis of the community interview findings were discussed and the results indicated that a collaborative partnership existed between the institution, students and the community. The research findings moreover indicated a reciprocal relationship and that all parties in this relationship benefited from the SL programme. However, the findings also indicated that the financial challenges which the community faces, may threaten the future sustainability of the project.

5.2 GENERAL CONCLUSIONS PERTAINING TO THIS STUDY

In terms of the literature review of this study and the subsequent analysis of the research findings in Chapter 4, it was possible to draw a number of conclusions.

There seems to have emerged in this study a correlation between the findings as reported in the literature review and the research results reported in Chapter 4, except what is missing is the civic dimension. It can be concluded that the purpose of SL as reported by the OT students and the head of the OT department was to integrate academic knowledge with practical service delivery. Their SL activities are in fact linked to the curriculum outcomes and are indeed credit bearing as described in the literature review (2.6.1). However, the development of civic awareness as indicated in 2.7.1 needs to be built upon as the third goal of SL, otherwise their SL activities could be regarded as mere "practicals" or

“internships”. According to the literature review a civic perspective to SL encourages the notions of reciprocity and collaboration between all parties (see 2.11 which refers to the benefits of SL to all stakeholders). The research findings confirm that a reciprocal and collaborative relationship indeed existed between all three parties as they attempted to address a particular community need within the Volcano project.

With regards to the mastery of course content and development of vocational skills this study concludes that an overwhelming number of students reported that their SL experiences significantly informed and facilitated their academic learning. This finding is verified in the literature review and is illustrated with Kolb’s experiential learning cycle (see 2.5) where reflection on the service experience leads to a deeper understanding and continuous reconstruction of knowledge and experience.

The research findings indicated that the criteria for the assessment of SL activities are closely related to the curriculum outcomes. However, it could be concluded that this needs to be a more inclusive process. Students and community partners may need to become more involved with and consulted in terms of the development and design of assessment criteria for SL. Furthermore, more time would seem to be needed for the allocation of meaningful reflection on SL experiences as described in 2.6.5, where reflection is identified as a foundational principle of SL. It is the reflection component that, among others, distinguishes SL from volunteerism or practicals.

The benefits of SL to the institution and the community were clearly illustrated in the research findings and verified in the literature review (2.11). The acknowledgement of Mode 2 knowledge production (2.6.3) is significant since this stimulated the OT department to assess the relevance of its course content. Learning from community expertise and demands clearly enabled the staff to include more relevant aspects to their course content thus making the course more socially accountable.

Within the Volcano Project selected for the purposes of this study, the institution and the community shared a common vision and planned joint strategies to address a particular community problem. However, the conclusion can be drawn that the same reciprocal relationship does not exist in all community projects. The research findings moreover indicated that a number of students experienced problems with community supervisors as a result of a lack of trust and collaborative relationships between parties. This perceived negative attitude has also been raised under the constraints of SL. Again, this suggests that community partners need to understand and be familiarised with the learning outcomes and assessment criteria for SL programmes. It would seem that if community partners do not understand and appreciate the value of SL, they may continue to treat students as a general nuisance and would not value the knowledge and skills that students can bring to the community.

Furthermore, in terms of the constraints and suggestions for improvement of SL practice, this study concludes that greater institutional support is required for financing students' travelling costs to SL centres. Funding allocations would generally reflect institutional priorities and to what extent the promotion of SL could become such a priority.

With regard to conclusions about the community interview findings, clear roles and responsibilities were reported. All community partners shared the common vision of poverty alleviation through job creation in the community. Furthermore, they assumed ownership of the project by linking up with other relevant community stakeholders who could support them in addressing their needs, for example, the assistance of the Tygerberg College. However, it is assumed that this particular project can only become a successful and sustainable initiative if it is financially supported by the business sector in the broader community.

Based on the analysis of the results of this study in Chapter 4, it can generally be concluded that SL has the potential to be successfully institutionalised if it is properly conceptualised, planned, implemented and assessed according to the key elements, goals and principles of service-learning. This, however, can only be achieved with greater institutional support in terms of:

- developing civic awareness and democratic citizenship among students;
- awareness of service-learning benefits to all stakeholders;
- greater familiarity of SL philosophy at management and leadership levels;
and
- funding the development and implementation of SL initiatives.

On the basis of these conclusions, the University of Stellenbosch should arguably consider how it intends to build these aspects into its institutional strategic plans.

5.3 GENERAL IMPLICATIONS OF THIS RESEARCH STUDY

Due to the relatively limited experience of SL programmes (not community service) in South Africa, the limited recording of research in this regard and the lack of a clear national policy framework for SL, it may be difficult to make any comparisons between the South African and USA SL context. For this reason this research study relied mainly on the USA SL experiences and lessons to help us achieve a broader understanding of what SL entails.

The implications of this qualitative research study may point to the fact that on-going relevant research on SL practices should be conducted for furthering meaningful understanding of the research problem, i.e. how effective is SL conceptualised, planned, implemented and assessed within various higher education institutions. In the light of the findings of this study, academic development and service delivery has been addressed within the case study. However, the third goal of SL, the civic dimension, has not explicitly been addressed in the case study. For this reason further research becomes necessary in order to help us overcome our fragmented SL programmes in South Africa and contribute to our SL understanding and knowledge base while at the same time addressing government's call for higher education institutions to become socially more responsive.

5.4 RECOMMENDATIONS EMANATING FROM THIS STUDY

From the analysis of the results of this study and the conclusions drawn, the following recommendations are suggested with regard to the effective conceptualisation, planning, implementation and assessment of service-learning practices at institutional level.

In order to align their goals with the demands of the Education White Paper and the National Higher Education Plan, it is recommended that higher education institutions transform their broad vision in terms of their goals of teaching, research and service by purposefully integrating academic learning programmes with service delivery. Furthermore, they would have to engage in serious debates as to how they intend to develop greater civic awareness among students in order to live out their vision of social responsiveness to the needs of their local communities. The institutional vision and mission, and more specifically their practical goals for implementation can be realised if the following factors are addressed:

5.4.1 The conceptualisation of service-learning

At a conceptual level, the institutionalisation of SL needs to seriously become part of the philosophy of the institution in a tangible way. This suggests that it has to be built into the vision and mission statements of institutions and assimilated into their strategic institutional plans and policies. Moreover, it would demand the committed involvement and genuine support of institutional leadership that will filter through to all levels of campus support in order to impact positively on SL policy development for a more diversified student population. The conceptualisation process also requires an understanding and familiarity with course-based service in communities, funding requirements and administrative support to faculties and departments to develop an ethos of learning that includes community service experiences. This may be accomplished by designing policy guidelines to include a creative model of service-learning that correspond with institutional priorities as well as the national needs of a transforming South Africa.

5.4.2 The planning of service-learning

Rigorous planning for service-learning processes within the institution should be determined by inclusive, yet diversified policy objectives, SL delivery strategies and establishing support links between various SL programmes in different faculties and departments of the institution. A recommendation is that plans be proposed for faculty committees to be formed to direct SL initiatives and planning policy about the academic curriculum, service delivery criteria, academic roles, and seeking grants and funding for the promotion of SL on campus. A further recommendation is that the institution should seriously consider establishing a unit or SL office for the purpose of co-ordinating all SL activities between the institution, local communities and sponsor agencies. At the planning level, faculties need to explore strategies for integrating the three core functions of the institution, i.e. teaching, research and service. This would imply that departments be allowed time to consult widely and redesign their courses to incorporate meaningful service-learning into their curricula.

5.4.3 The implementation of service-learning

Any meaningful implementation of a SL programme should be able to take place at different levels. SL should form an integral part of all teaching and research activities. It should be developed as part of the academic curriculum and be credit bearing in order to maintain credibility among lecturers and fit SAQA requirements. However, successful SL can only be implemented if there is a genuine collaborative partnership between community and university in all phases of implementation. This may imply having regular workshops with all relevant stakeholders to engage in developing a common understanding of their expectations and criteria for involvement in SL activities.

Faculty and departmental involvement in the advancement of SL could be used to transform academic culture. SL should be on the agenda for all faculty board and staff meetings and regular progress reports submitted. Moreover, SL needs to form part of continuing professional development and staff development programmes and workshops should be planned and built into timeframes. Regular

feedback sessions should also be structured. Furthermore, all academic departments need to be included in designing broad guidelines to drive SL programmes and allow for flexibility within various departments.

Academic departments could also create formal and informal committees and groups to help direct the efforts of service-learning. A SL committee could help create policies about the curriculum, faculty roles and also influence other committees in spreading the language of service to all domains of campus.

Furthermore, academic reward structures need to be addressed. Promotion and tenure policies have to be designed and implemented to act as incentives to academic staff for recognising and rewarding their SL involvement. Clearly, any initiative centred around teaching and service is bound to fail if academic staff is not given recognition for the time they spend on these activities and time they spend with students.

5.4.4 Assessment of service-learning

The assessment of service-learning activities should of necessity be institutionalised at all levels. Assessment criteria and performance indicators for successful SL programmes should ideally reflect the SAQA requirements in terms of quality assurance and benchmark criteria. Individual faculties and departments may consult and design their own assessment criteria to evaluate the effectiveness of their SL involvement. Quality assurance benchmarks could provide academics with criteria to assess and validate their own SL experiences. Further assessment criteria could be based on the following factors:

- SL contributions must relate to the department's area of expertise or discipline;
- SL contributions should relate to the recognised needs of the institution, the students and the local community and should have a lasting impact; and
- SL activities should provide a means for students to integrate their service experiences with course content (i.e. action and reflection).

5.5 CONCLUSION

The central problem addressed by this study is that higher education institutions are not adequately meeting the needs of their students because their academic curricula are not sufficiently contextualised and integrated with service to communities. The purpose of this study is to explore the current SL practices in the OT department of the US in relation to the key elements, goals, principles and values of SL, and to assess its impact on the students, the institution and the community they serve.

This study concludes that the OT academic curriculum is indeed integrated with service to communities and that SL experiences enhanced the integration of theory with practice. Furthermore the results indicate that SL tasks were carried out in a spirit of collaboration, reciprocity (in the Volcano project), developed the habit of critical reflection and, to some degree, increased students' understanding of the issues underlying social problems in the community they served. However, the study also concludes that the OT department needs to integrate the development of civic awareness and understanding of responsible citizenship among students with academic and service learning outcomes.

SL can potentially act as a vehicle through which higher education institutions in South Africa can meet their goals for student learning and service outcomes while making unique contributions to resolve social problems and meeting community needs. The general challenge for such institutions is to align SL with their institutional mission and strategic goals. As a relatively new and much contested teaching and learning philosophy, the recommendations suggested in this research study, may contribute to a broader understanding of the notion of service-learning and hopefully lead to the institutionalisation of SL within the University of Stellenbosch. This would mean that the institutional leadership at all levels need to understand and appreciate that SL enhances civic responsibility by addressing social problems in an informed, committed and positive manner. Civic responsibility can best be met when academics work toward linking community service, student learning outcomes and civic education. Quality service-learning exists only when all three components come together.

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APPENDICES:

- APPENDIX A : Letter of permission from the Occupational Therapy Department
- APPENDIX B : Letter to Occupational Therapy students
- APPENDIX C ; Questionnaire
- APPENDIX D ; A sample of one of the interview transcripts
- APPENDIX E : A letter from one of the OT students



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TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

I hereby give permission and consent that the final year occupational therapy students be involved in a research project, by filling out a questionnaire for the purposes of the research study. I furthermore give my permission and consent to be interviewed and quoted only for the purposes of the following research project:

*A model for the conceptualisation, planning, implementation
and evaluation of service learning in higher education
institutions.*

Conducted by Freda J Daniels as part of her research for the M.Phil degree:
Education and Training for Lifelong Learning.

Name: *Mrs. Susan Beukes*

Signature: *Beukes*

Fakulteit Gesondheidswetenskappe • Faculty of Health Sciences

Verbind tot Optimale Gesondheid • Committed to Optimal Health

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APPENDIX B

Dear Students

This survey is part of a Masters research study to assess the current practices of service-learning or community service learning within your institution. This survey is aimed at students who are/ were involved in service-learning projects or programmes during their final year of study. The questionnaire asks about your experiences, your opinions and reflection on self-assessments.

Service-learning is about learning course content through performing a service related to that content in the community. In other words, it is a form of experiential education in which students engage in activities that address human and community needs together with structured opportunities intentionally designed to promote student learning, development and reflection.

Your participation in this survey will be highly appreciated. I hope that you will complete the questionnaire fully so that I may have as accurate a picture as possible. **Your responses will be confidential, and no one on your campus will have access to your individual answers.** All results will be reported as group data only. The information collected may help with recommendations to higher education institutions for future implementation of service-learning programmes or projects.

Please return the completed form in the pre-addressed envelope by the 19th April 2002.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION.

Sincerely

Freda Daniels

APPENDIX C

Survey Questionnaire to students

PLEASE FEEL FREE TO ANSWER EITHER IN ENGLISH OR AFRIKAANS

Please provide the following background information about your service-learning history:

- 1. Name of course which integrates service-learning:
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- 2. What type of service-learning activity/ project were you involved in?
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- 3. What did you do?
- 4. With whom?
- 5. How long?

Comment on the following questions as honestly as possible:

- 1. In your opinion, what is the purpose of the service-learning component of your course?
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- 2. Do you feel that your participation in the service-learning component of your course has contributed to your mastery of the course content? Please explain.
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3. Do you feel that your participation in the service-learning component of your course has equipped you with knowledge, specific skills and experiences that may help you in your future career? Please explain.

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4. In your opinion, how has the service-learning component of your course contributed to the community that you served?

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5. In your opinion, how has the institution/ university/ department benefited from your service-learning project or activities?

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6. Please explain how your service-learning component was assessed and how many credits were allocated to it?

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7. What were some of the constraints that you experienced during your service-learning experiences?

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8. Mention some of the external factors that impacted on the successful delivery of your service-learning experience? e.g. having to enter unsafe areas.

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9. Do you have any other suggestions for improving the service-learning component of your course? Please explain.

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10. Can you comment on the most significant or meaningful incident(s) which you experienced during your service-learning term?

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APPENDIX D

EXCERPTS FROM INTERVIEWS WITH COMMUNITY VOLUNTEERS

An interview was conducted with four community volunteers. The purpose of the interview was explained to them and they were encouraged to be frank and honest in their responses to the questions. There were five basic questions in the interview guide. These are indicated in bold font and all further discussions between the interviewer and the volunteers that followed the specific question are presented after the question. Volunteer names are indicated with a letter to indicate the volunteer's response. Interviews are translated into English but language errors are not corrected. Questions by the interviewer are indicated by **I**. The following are excerpts from the interview discussion.

I: How did you become involved in the Volcano Project?

W: I attended a meeting in the community centre; it was a meeting for parents and anyone who was interested in becoming involved in the school. I enjoy working with children and thought this may be a good opportunity to get some training.

J: I have completed matric but could not find any work. When L told me about this project and her involvement I thought this might be a way to keep me busy but also to find a job that I could add to my CV.

M: I had some training in dance and my cousin asked me to come and help them at the school with a concert. Once I was here, and saw what the other volunteers were doing, I became interested in the project and asked if I could also join.

K: The children at home told us about the volunteers who help them with their schoolwork. They brought a letter from the school requesting for more people to become involved in the project as volunteers.

I: What is your role in the Volcano Project?

W: We teach the learners from Mondays to Thursdays. The OT students work out the lessons and we have to teach them.

J: We work mainly with young learners in the foundation phase. The learners are divided into groups and we take each group for a training session twice a week. In this way we cover a large number of students.

M: We are divided between six schools, two of us work at a school. But we come to this school in the afternoons to meet with Mrs D. (The full-time OT) She is our supervisor and does the initial training before the students work with us. She discusses the lessons and the progress of the learners with us. We can also report problems and ask for help.

- J: On Thursday afternoons we all meet to prepare the lessons for the next week's sessions.
- I: **Explain your relationship with the OT students and how do you work together?**
- M: We get on very well with the students. They are so helpful. They give us ideas how to treat the children.
- W: They work out the lessons and teach us step-by-step how to do it ourselves. We know exactly what to do. They are very patient with us and we feel free to discuss our problem areas with them. I see this training as a step ahead because I want to train as a pre-school teacher at a college.
- L: They also train us in enrichment programmes such HIV/AIDS, how to resolve conflict, communication skills, and so on, and we use these skills when we work with the learners.
- K: What is good about these programmes is that we can take it home and apply in our own community too. I have learnt so much about conflict that now I have learnt how to deal with it in my own home as well as with the learners in the school who have behaviour problems.
- W: And the training programme with the children, I now have the skills to prepare my own child for school. I use all the ideas with my own child.
- M: I never knew much about AIDS but now I can watch out for symptoms in my own community and be of help and provide guidance to people. I would like to become more involved in this type of training in our community. There is such a great need for AIDS awareness here.
- I: **How has the community benefited from the involvement of the University and its students?**
- W: They helped parents in their role; some parents who were unemployed actually discovered that they had other skills to offer the school. So they became more involved in the schools by sharing some of their skills.
- K: Because we are helping to relieve the workload of the teachers, they have more time to spend with their other learners. In this way they can provide more quality time to learners in the class.
- L: The enrichment programmes that the students taught us, we also plough back into the community. So, yes, the community and particularly we, the volunteers, have benefited in a big way from their involvement in our area.
- M: Remember also, many of the previous volunteers have found permanent work after completing a year in the programme. So after this year I'm also hoping to find a job at either a crèche or an aftercare centre.

I: How do you think the students and the University benefited from their involvement in this project?

W: I think the students get the chance to practice the things that they learn at the University. So they try out all their ideas with us and see how it works. They benefit from working with us and we also benefit from this because we are trained as OT assistants.

K: The University has become more visible in our community because they are also running other programmes in this area. So many people are becoming more aware of their presence here. But the Volcano Project has been so successful that the OT students and the University must be very pleased.

APPENDIX E

To Mr Aspelling, Mr Augellus and
Ms November

Thank you for the privilege of spending six weeks at Webner Primary School. The Volcano project was a real eye opener for me to see how regardless of the obstacles that so frequently stand in the way, people are still so willing to put their time and energy into such a worthwhile project that daily touches lives in need! I really enjoyed my time there and I want to thank you for all you did to make it possible!

I will be in contact with Ms S. Donsa so should see you in the near future

Thanks again
God's Richest Blessings

(IV year OT STUDENT)



Agter: Lydia Mullins (Vert. Op Bestuur), Winnie Amos, Mev. Doman, Merle Peterson, Jolene Oliphant, Katy Forbes, en Renshia Baartman (Vert. Op Bestuur). Voor: Jeannine Williams, Lucinda Forbes, Edwina Adonis